the Annotated BIBLE

a commentary
on the
Holy Scriptures

by Arno C. Gaebelein

Volume V DANIEL • MALACHI

The Annotated Bible

Vol. 5 — Daniel - Malachi

by A. C. Gaebelein

Dr. Gaebelein's greatest work is the Annotated Bible. It covers the entire Bible in nine volumes of over 3,000 pages. The production of this work demanded a vast amount of research and reading. The construction is as follows: An introduction to each Bible book. The arguments of destructive criticism are examined and answered. External and internal evidences are given and authenticity of the different books; the objections made by modernistic scholars are answered. This is followed by a careful division of the book itself. Here the purpose of each book is examined and the main divisions and subdivisions are pointed out.

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The Holy Scriptures Analysed and Annotated

BY

A. C. GAEBELEIN

Founder of "Our Hope"

Volume V

Daniel to Malachi

An "Our Hope Press" Book

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THE PROPHET DANIEL

The Prophet Daniel.

At the close of the history of Hezekiah, the noble king of Judah, as reported by the prophet Isaiah, is found a significant prophecy. Hezekiah, like so many other good men before and after him, had fallen into the crime of the devil, pride (1 Timothy iii:6), and the Lord through the prophet Isaiah announced therefore the future judgment upon the royal house of David: "Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day shall be carried to Babylon, nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said, moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days" (Isaiah xxxix:6-8).

About one hundred years after this startling prophecy was literally fulfilled. The opening verses of the book of Daniel introduce us to this. The Babylonian king came and beseiged the city of Jerusalem and conquered it. Among those carried away was Daniel and his companions. Daniel, as we learn from the third verse of the first chapter, was of princely descent.

This young man, the captive in Babylon, became, through the marvellous providence of God, one of the leading figures and prominent actors in the great Babylonian empire, under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. He was made, in spite of his youth, a great man—the prime minister of Babylon.

Of his personal history, his character and remarkable experiences we know more than of any of the other prophets of God. As a mere lad he was brought to the strange land as a captive. We behold him and his companion, true to Jehovah, maintaining their God-given place of separation. He honored Jehovah and Jehovah honored him. Soon the Lord used the young captive by revealing unto him the forgotten dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the interpretation of the dream. Then followed the exaltation of the obscure captive; and afterwards he seemed to have been the close companion of the great Gentile monarch, who acknowledged finally the Lord-God of Israel as his God. Then God honored him by giving him the great visions of the future, so remarkable in their scope. The Lord appeared unto him; he talked with angels, and the messenger Gabriel addressed him as "the man greatly beloved."

As an old man he had been quite forgotten during the reign of the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar; only the Queen mother, the aged wife of Nebuchadnezzar, remembered him. In that memorable night when Babylon fell the old prophet interpreted the hand.

writing on the wall, though old in years, still young in his faith. Under the reign of Darius he was cast among the lions, on account of his devotion to Jehovah, and wonderfully delivered.

What a man of prayer he was we learn from the ninth chapter. He reached a very old age, continuing even into the reign of Cyrus, and when his great work was done, ere the Lord called him home, he received the promise: "But go thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of days" (xii:13). In the great faith chapter of the Hebrew Epistle his name is not mentioned, but his deeds are there. "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions" (Hebrews xi:33).

The Authenticity of Daniel.

Perhaps no other book of the Bible has been so much attacked as the Book of Daniel. It is a veritable battlefield between faith and unbelief. For about 2,000 years, wicked men, heathen philosophers and infidels have hammered away against it; but the Book has proved to be the anvil upon which the critics' hammers have been broken into pieces. The Book has survived all attacks, and we need not fear that the weak and puerile critics, the most subtle infidels of Christendom in our day, can harm the Book. It has been denied that Daniel wrote the book during the Babylonian captivity. Kuenen and Wellhausen and their imitating disciples like Canon Farrar, Driver and others of inferior calibre, claim that the work was not written in the Exile, but centuries later. Daniel had nothing to do with the Book at all; a holy and gifted Jew wrote it instead, and it is avowed fiction. Such are a few of the infidel statements made against this sublime Book. These critics follow the wicked assailant of Christianity of the third century, Porphyr, who contended that the Book of Daniel is a forgery, that it was written during the time of the Maccabees, after Antiochus Epiphanes, so clearly foretold in this book, had appeared. The whole reasoning method of the destructive Bible-Criticism may be reduced to the following: Prophecy is an impossibility, there is no such thing as foretelling events to come. Therefore a book which contains predictions must have been written after the events which are predicted. But how could the man who committed such a forgery be a pious Jew? No, the Book of Daniel is either Divine or it is the most colossal forgery and fraud. No middle ground is possible.

We give a few of the evidences which answer the infidel attacks upon this great fundamental prophetic book.

It should be enough for every Christian that our Lord, the infallible Son of God, mentions Daniel by name in His great prophetic discourse delivered on Olivet (Matthew xxiv:15). There can be no question that our Lord at least twice more referred to the Book of Daniel. When He speaks of Himself and His coming again in the clouds of

heaven as the Son of Man, He confirms Daniel's vision in chapter vii:13; and when He speaks of the stone to fall in Matthew xxi:44, He confirms Daniel ii:44-45. How does the critic meet this argument? He tells us that our Lord accommodated Himself to the Jewish views current in His day. They say, perhaps He knew better, and some say that He did not know. In other words, they deny the infallibility of our Lord, and with this invention that He accommodated Himself against His better knowledge, they accuse our Lord of something worse. When the Lord uttered the words, "Daniel the Prophet" He put at once His unimpeachable seal on both the person and the Book of Daniel.

But there are other evidences. The heathen Porphyr declared that the Book was written during the days of the Maccabees; as stated above the modern critics have echoed the opinion of that lost heathen soul. But the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which was made before the times of the Maccabees, contains the Book of Daniel. It was in the hands of the learned Hebrews, who translated in the third century before Christ the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek. The Book therefore antedates the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Furthermore during the days of the Maccabees a book was written, the first book of the Maccabees, a historical account of those eventful days. This Maccabean work not only presupposes the existence of the Book of Daniel, but shows actual acquaintance with it, and therefore gives proof that the Book must have been written long before that period (1 Macc. i:54,compare with Daniel ix:27; ii:49 and Daniel iii).

The reliable Jewish historian Josephus also furnisheth historically an evidence for Daniel. He tells us that when Alexander the Great, who is mentioned in Daniel's prophecy (chapter viii), came to Jerusalem in the year 332 B. C., Jaddua the high priest, showed him the prophecies of Daniel, and Alexander was greatly impressed with them.

Then we have the testimony of another prophet of the exile, the prophet Ezekiel. He speaks twice in the highest terms of Daniel, whose contemporary he was. (See Ezekiel xiv:14-20 and xxviii:3.)

Daniel also betrays such an intimate acquaintance with Chaldean customs and history, as well as their religion, such as none but one who lived there and was an eye-witness could have possessed. For instance, the description of the Chaldean magicians perfectly agrees with the accounts found in other sources. The account of the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar is confirmed by the ancient historian Berosus.

Then there has been a most striking vindication of this Book through the Babylonian excavations, tablets, cylinders and monuments. Into this we cannot fully enter, but we cite but one of the most striking.

The name of Belshazzar furnished for a long time material to the

infidels to reject the historical accuracy of the book. The father of Belshazzar was Nabonnaid, who was not a son of Nebuchadnezzar at all. How then could Belshazzar be a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar? This objection is seemingly strengthened by the fact that no ancient historians include in the list of Babylonian kings the name of Belshazzar.

Berosus, who lived about 250 years after the Persian invasion, gives the following list of Babylonian monarchs:

Nabuchodonosar (Nebuchadnezzar). Evil Marudak, who is the Evil Merodach of the Bible. Neriglissor. Laborosoarchod. Nabonnaid. Cyrus, the Persian conqueror.

Different attempts were made to clear up this difficulty, but they failed. Now, if Daniel wrote his Book he must be correct. But the critics are ever ready to put the doubt not on the side of history, but on the side of the Bible. So they said Berosus was not mistaken and that if Daniel really had written the Book which bears his name he would have been historically correct. This is how matters stood up to 1854. In that year Sir Rawlinson translated a number of tablets brought to light by the spade from the ruins of the Babylonian civilization. These contained the memorials of Nabonnaid, and in these the name of Bil-shar-uzzar appeared frequently, and is mentioned as the son of Nabonnaid and sharing the government with him. The existence of Belshazzar and the accuracy of Daniel were at once established beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Daniel was promised by Belshazzar to become the third ruler in the kingdom (Dan. v:16).

Why the third and not the second? Because Nabonnaid was the first, Belshazzar his son was the second and vice-regent. Nabonnaid had a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar for wife and therefore Belshazzar from his mother's side was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.

But have the critics learned by this complete defeat? Have they profited by this experience and will they leave the Bible alone? Not by any means. They will continue to look for flaws in the infallible Book. Some day they will discover the seriousness of their work.

The Important Prophetic Message of Daniel.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the Book of Daniel. It is the key to all prophecy; without a knowledge of the great prophecies contained in this book the entire prophetic portion of the word of God must remain a sealed book. One of the reasons why so few Christians have a correct knowledge of the prophetic forecast in the Bible is the neglect of the Book of Daniel. The great prophetic portions of the New Testament, the Olivet discourse of our Lord (Matthew xxiv and xxv), and above all the great New Testament book of prophecy, the Book of Revelation, can only be understood through the prophecies of Daniel.

To both, the Babylonian king and God's prophet were revealed the political history of the "Times of the Gentiles" (Luke xxi:24). The rise and fall of the great monarchies, Babylonia, Medo-Persian, Graeco-Macedonia and the Roman, are successively revealed in this Book. The appointed end of these times and what will follow the times of the Gentiles is made known. Our generation lives in the very shadow of that end. Then there are prophecies relating more specifically to Jerusalem and the Jewish people, showing what will yet come for that city and the nation.

It will be impossible in our brief annotations to do justice to all the details of this prophetic book. The larger work on "The Prophet Daniel" by the author of the Annotated Bible may be obtained at a small cost from the publisher and this exposition should be carefully studied with the accompanying pages.

The Division of Daniel.

The Book of Daniel is written in two languages, in the Hebrew and in the Aramaic, the language of Chaldea. The first chapter is written in Hebrew, in style closely allied to the Hebrew used in the book of Ezekiel. Chapters viii–xii are likewise written in the Hebrew language. But chapters ii:4–vii:28 are written in the Aramaic language. This gives an additional argument for the authenticity of the book. The author was conversant with both languages, an attainment exactly suited to a Hebrew living in exile, but not in the least so to an author in the Maccabean age, when the Hebrew had long since ceased to be a living language, and had been supplanted by the Aramaic vernacular dialect. Daniel was led to employ both languages for a specific reason. What concerned these great monarchies, Babylonia and Medo-Persia, was written in the language with which they were familiar. What concerned the Jewish people was written for them in Hebrew. We shall not follow the linguistic division of the book.

We find in the book two main sections:

I. DANIEL IN BABYLON. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM. HISTORICAL EVENTS. Chapters i–vi.

Chapter I. Daniel and His Companions in Babylon.

Chapter II. The Great Prophetic Dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

Chapter III–VI. Historical Events.

II. THE GREAT PROPHECIES OF DANIEL. Chapters vii–xii.

Chapter VII. The Night Visions of Daniel.

Chapter VIII. The Vision of the Ram and the He-Goat.

Chapter IX. The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.

Chapter X. Preparation for the Final Prophecy.

Chapter XI. The Wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae Predicted. The Coming Events of the End.

Chapter XII. The Great Tribulation and Israel's Deliverance.

Analysis and Annotations.

I. DANIEL IN BABYLON. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM. HISTORICAL EVENTS.

Chapters i–vi.

CHAPTER I.

DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS IN BABYLON.

1. The Introduction. Verses 1-2.
2. The King's Command. Verses 3-5.
3. Daniel and His Companions. Verses 6-21.

1. The Introduction: Verses 1–2. Divine judgment, which had threatened so long, had finally fallen upon Jerusalem. It was executed by the divinely chosen instrument, Nebuchadnezzar. Three times he came against Jerusalem. In 606 B.C. he appeared the first time. This is the visitation mentioned here. In 598 he came again and carried away more captives, including Ezekiel. In 587 he burned the city and the temple.

2. The King's Command: Verses 3–5. As already stated in the introduction the young captives of the king's seed and of the princes (both of Judah) was in fulfilment of prophecy. They were to be added to the king's court and to receive special royal favors, instructions in the wisdom and language of the Chaldeans and have the privileges of the king's table.

3. Daniel and His Companions: Verses 6–21. Daniel means—God is my Judge; Hananiah is—Beloved of the Lord; Michael—Who is as God; Azariah—The Lord is my help. These beautiful names were soon changed into names of heathen meaning, to blot out the very memory of Jehovah. Daniel becomes Belteshazzar (Bel's prince); Hananiah is named Shadrach (Illumined by the sun-god); Mishael is called Meshach (who is like Shach-Venus); and Azariah is changed to Abednego (the servant of Nego).

The purpose of the four expressed their loyalty to the

God of their fathers and their obedience to His law. The Lord rewarded them for their loyalty and faithfulness, as He is still the rewarder of all who trust in Him and walk in separation.

CHAPTER II.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM AND ITS INTERPRETATION.

1. The Forgotten Dream. Verses 1-13.
2. The Prayer Meeting in Babylon and the Answer. Verses 14-23.
3. Daniel Before the King. Verses 24-28.
4. The Revelation and Interpretation of the Dream. Verses 24-45.
5. The Promotion of Daniel and His Companions. Verses 46-49.

1. The Forgotten Dream: Verses 1–13. The King had a dream which was occasioned by thinking concerning the future (verse 29). God answered his desire by this dream, which made a great impression on him. But he had forgotten the dream. The soothsayers, wise men and magicians, who were kept by him to interpret dreams, were unable to reveal the forgotten dream: they confessed their utter helplessness. The king condemned them to death. Inasmuch as Daniel and his companions were counted among the wise men, "they sought Daniel and his companions to be slain."

2. The Prayer Meeting and the Answer: Verses 14–23. And now Daniel steps to the front. But there is no haste and no hurry connected with it, for "He that believeth shall not make haste." He is brought before the king and promises to the king the meaning of that dream. It was the language of faith; he had confidence in God. He knew that the same Jehovah who had given another captive wisdom, Joseph in Egypt, was his God also. Then there was a prayer meeting in Babylon. While the condemned wise men, the astrologers and magicians trembled for fear of death, Daniel and his companions asked "mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret." The prayer was speedily answered.

3. Daniel Before the King: Verses 24–28. After Daniel had praised the God of heaven he requested an audience with the King. How beautiful he is in the presence of the mighty Monarch! What an opportunity to glorify himself!

But he hides himself completely and gives God all the glory. Then he tells the king that in the dream he is about to relate God has made known unto him "what shall be in the latter days."

4. The Revelation and Interpretation of the Dream: Verses 24–45. Daniel then told to the king the forgotten dream:

> Thou, O King, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth (verses 31-35).

The great man image is the prophetic symbol of the "Times of the Gentiles." This expression "The Times of the Gentiles" is not found in the Book of Daniel, but it is a New Testament phrase. Our Lord used it exclusively. In that part of His prophetic discourse which is reported in the Gospel of Luke and which relates to the fall of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the nation, our Lord said: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled" (Luke xxi:24). Now, the times of the Gentiles did not begin when Jerusalem rejected the Lord from heaven. Our Lord does not say that the times of the Gentiles were then ushered in. The times of the Gentiles started with the Babylonian captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. The Glory of the Lord departed from Jerusalem. The other great Prophet of the captivity, Ezekiel, beheld the departure of the Shekinah. "Then did the Cherubim lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the Lord went up

from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (Ezek. xi:22–23). But before that Jeremiah recorded a remarkable word. These are the words of Jehovah concerning Nebuchadnezzar:

> I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand (Jeremiah xxvii:5–8).

Jerusalem had been supreme because the throne and the glory of Jehovah was there. Though Assyria, Egypt and Babylon had tried repeatedly to overthrow Jerusalem, they were held in check by the power of God and Divine intervention, but when the measure of the wickedness of Jerusalem was full, Nebuchadnezzar was chosen to become the first great monarch of the times of the Gentiles. The dominion was then taken away from Jerusalem and transferred to the Gentiles.

Therefore the golden head in this prophetic man-image represents Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire. The chest of silver, according to Divine interpretation, stands for an inferior monarchy which was to follow the Babylonian empire. This second world empire is the Medo-Persian. The belly and thighs of brass represent the third great monarchy, the Graeco-Macedonian. The fourth great monarchy which was to rise during the times of the Gentiles, represented by the two legs of iron, is the iron empire, Rome. Here, then, is history pre-written. God, who knows the end from the beginning, revealed in this dream the course of the times of the Gentiles, beginning with the Babylonian monarchy and followed by three more: The Medo-Persian,

the Graeco-Macedonian and the Roman. Notice the process of deterioration as indicated in the composition of this image: Gold, silver, brass, iron, and finally the iron getting less and clay taking a prominent place. It shows that politically the times of the Gentiles are not improving.

Everything which this image represents has been fulfilled, except the last portion, when a stone falls out of heaven and strikes the ten toes and the clay, so that the whole colossal figure goes to pieces, the different constituent metals become like the chaff on the summer threshingfloor and the striking stone becomes a mountain and fills the whole earth.

The fourth Empire, the Roman, has not yet fulfilled its history. The final form, and with it the final form of the times of the Gentiles is yet to pass into history. This final form is symbolically seen in the ten toes and the clay, in the feet of the image. The territory which constituted the now extinct Roman empire will in the near future undergo a political revival. It will reappear in a confederated Europe, except certain countries which never belonged to the Roman empire. In that confederacy will be kingdoms to the number of ten; the clay represents democracies, the rule by the people and for the people. The late great war has brought such a political combination into our times. Such is the future and end of the times of the Gentiles, as foretold in the feet of the image.

But what does the smiting stone represent, the stone which abolisheth the image and becomes itself a great mountain filling the whole earth?

The Stone is Christ. That the stone represents Christ is seen from the Scriptures. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation" (Isa. xxviii:16). Zechariah speaks of this stone with seven eyes upon it and engraven. We read of Him in the New Testament as the foundation stone of the church, the cornerstone, the stone rejected by the builders. Most interesting is His own word in the Gospel of Matthew: "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken;

but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. xxi:44). Here we have Israel's sin and judgment and the fate of the Gentiles. Israel stumbled against this stone; for them He was a stumblingstone and rock of offence. In consequence they were broken as a nation. But the Gentile world, rejecting Him, will be broken when the stone falls. They will be ground to powder by the falling stone. Our Lord must have had the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in mind when he spake these words. The falling stone of which He speaks and the striking stone in the dream mean the same Person, Himself.

The stone doing its work in smiting the image is a prophecy of the second coming of our Lord. The mountain filling after that the earth foreshadows that kingdom which will be established with the return of Christ and His enthronement as King of kings.

5. The Promotion of Daniel and His Companions: Verses 46–49. The heathen monarch then acknowledged Daniel's God in a threefold way: The God of gods (the Father); the Lord of Kings (God the Son); the Revealer of secrets (God the Holy Spirit). Daniel is lifted from the place of humiliation to a place of exaltation. He did not forget his companions; they share honor and glory with him. It is a beautiful picture of that day when our Lord will receive the throne and when His own will not be left behind in sharing with Him His glory.

HISTORICAL EVENTS.

CHAPTERS III-VI.

The four chapters which follow the great dream of Nebuchadnezzar are of a historical character. They do not contain direct prophecies, but record certain events which transpired during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, his successor and grandson Belshazzar, and Darius, the Mede. On the personal history of these three persons and where they are found in profane history we have little to say, as a deeper examination of this subject would lead us too far and would be tedious. But this much must be said that the criticism

which charged Daniel with being incorrect has been completely silenced by the Babylonian cylinders of Cyrus and Nabonnaid and the so-called annalistic tablets, the very records of those days. It is true the personality of Darius the Mede has not yet been definitely located historically. However, we do not believe the Bible because its historical statements can be verified from profane history. We believe the Bible because its records are divinely inspired and therefore correct. What would we know of the genuineness of these ancient tablets and cylinders covered with cuneiform inscriptions if it were not for the Bible? These witnesses from the stones, which indeed cry out, do not verify the Bible, they are rather declared genuine and correct by the Word of God.

These four chapters then give us historical events. Each has a prophetic meaning, though direct prophecy is not found in them.

These chapters describe the moral conditions which held sway during the two first world empires; they indicate prophetically the moral conditions which continue to the end of the times of the Gentiles. Five things may be traced in these four chapters: The moral characteristics of the times of the Gentiles; what will happen at the close of these times; the faithful remnant in suffering; their deliverance and the Gentiles acknowledging God, as King and the God of heaven.

CHAPTER III.

THE IMAGE OF GOLD.

1. The Image of Gold. Verses 1-7.
2. The Faithful Three. Verses 8-18.
3. The Miraculous Deliverance. Verses 19-25.
4. The Worshipping King.

1. The Image of Gold: Verses 1–7. He had an immense statue of gold made, the image of a man, no doubt, and he set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. It was idolatry and the deification of man. Idolatry and the deification of man are then the first moral characteris-

tics mentioned which are to prevail during the times of the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles produce a religion which is opposed to the God of heaven. The image was sixty cubits high and six broad. Seven is the divine number and six is the number of man. Sixty cubits and six reminds us of that familiar passage in the Book of Revelation, where we have the number of a man given, that mysterious number "Six hundred three-score and six," that is 666. The image then represents man, but the climax of man was not yet reached. However, the beginning foreshadows the end of the times of the Gentiles. That end is described in chapter xiii of Revelation.

The civil power tried to force this universal religion upon the people. The great governors, judges, captains and rulers had to appear for the dedication of the image. But then the whole thing had a religious aspect. Listen, after looking at this great awe-inspiring image of gold—the sweetest music—the cornet, the flute, the harp, the sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music sounds forth. No doubt the Chaldean priests approached chanting some sweet Babylonian song. Why all this? To stir up the religious emotions and aid in this way the worship of an idol. It is intensely interesting that the ancient Babylonian worship, with its ceremonials and chanting is reproduced in Rome, which is called in Revelation, Babylon.*

2. The Faithful Three: Verses 8–18. The companions of Daniel refused to worship the image and were cast into the fiery furnace. Notice their wonderful trust in God.

3. The Miraculous Deliverance: Verses 19–25. The very men who cast them down were consumed by the flames. But when the King looked towards the furnace he beheld to his great astonishment not three men bound and burning up, but four men loose and actually walking in the fire. "They have no hurt and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." And when they were brought up from the

*The Book by Mr. Hyslop "The Two Babylons" gives reliable and important information on this fact.

fiery furnace, no smell of fire was about them, not even a hair was singed, only the bands which has bound them were burned off. The fire had set them free but it could not touch them. But did the King speak true when he beheld the fourth like the Son of God? Little did he know what he said or what it meant, but assuredly he saw in that fire the Son of God, Jehovah, for He had promised His people, "When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle on thee." The faithful Lord kept His promise to His trusting servants.

And has not all this been repeated throughout the times of the Gentiles especially during the Roman Empire? Pagan Rome persecuted the true worshippers of God and in great persecutions multitudes suffered martyrdom. But think of what is worse, Papal Rome, that Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots. There we find the images and the sweet music, the prostrations and political power enforcing unity of worship. The fiery furnaces were there, the stake, the most awful tortures for those who were faithful to God and to their Lord. Think of the story of the Waldensians and Huguenots. And while for these noble martyrs, for whom there is a martyr's crown in the coming day of Christ, there came no deliverance and their bodies were consumed by the fire, yet the Son of God was with them and with praising hearts and a song upon their lips, He carried them through the fire.

And during the great tribulation will a faithful remnant of Jews suffer under the man of sin, as these three Hebrews suffered; but they will likewise be delivered.

4. The Worshipping King. Verses 26-30. Once more Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God and made a decree that severe punishment should be the lot of all who say anything amiss against the God of Daniel's companions.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TREE VISION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

1. The King's Proclamation. Verses 1-3.
2. The King Relates the Tree Vision. Verses 4-18.
3. Daniel Interprets the Vision. Verses 19-27.
4. The Tree Vision Fulfilled. The King's Abasement and Restoration. Verses 28-37.

1. The King's Proclamation: Verses 1-3. This chapter is in form, at least in part, of a proclamation. This proclamation must have been written after the king had passed through the experience recorded in this chapter.

2. The King Relates the Tree Vision: Verses 4-18. Read carefully the vision the king had and compare with Ezekiel xxxi:3 and Matthew xiii, the parable of the mustard seed. In each case the great big tree is the symbol of pride and self-exaltation.

3. Daniel Interprets the Vision: Verses 19-27. The prophet's interpretation of this dream needs no further comment. A careful reading will make it clear in its meaning.

4. The Tree Vision Fulfilled. The King's Abasement and Restoration: Verses 28-37. Twelve months later he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. Then with a haughty mien he utters the fatal words: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty." Notice the personal pronoun. But while he yet uttered these words a heavenly voice was heard which announced that the kingdom is departed from him. What Daniel had said in his interpretation is repeated from heaven. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar and he was driven from men and did eat grass as the oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And after the seven times had passed over him his understanding returned unto him and he blessed the Most High.

The great characteristic here is pride and self-exaltation.

As judgment came upon the great monarch in the beginning of the times of the Gentiles, so judgment will yet fall upon this proud and self-exalting age of the Gentiles. That great big, political and religious tree will some day be hewn down and be destroyed.

And Nebuchadnezzar's great humiliation in becoming a beast for seven times (seven years),* points us to the end of this Gentile age once more. Apostasy from God will be the great characteristic of that end. There will be no more looking up to God, but the attitude of the beast will be the attitude of the nations. We see much of this already. They mind earthly things and become the "earth-dwellers" so frequently mentioned in the Book of Revelation. Madness and bestiality will seize upon the Gentiles, after the One who hinders, the Holy Spirit is removed. Then proud and apostate Christendom will believe the lie and follow the beast with its lying wonders. This will last seven times, that is, seven years.

The stump of the great tree which remains in the field suggests the fact that the judgments which fall upon the nations in the time of the end will not completely destroy all nations. Many of them will be swept away. For those who wilfully rejected the Gospel and turned away from the truth, there is no hope. But there are others which will be left and when these judgments are in the earth, the nations learn righteousness.

The millennium is also seen in this chapter in the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar and in the praise He gives to the Most High. In the previous chapter the three friends of Daniel speak of "Our God," but in this chapter we hear of "The Most High." It is the millennial name of God. We see then in the fourth chapter the pride and self-exaltation of the Gentiles, and how the Gentiles will be humiliated and judged. First there is self-exaltation, that is followed

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*The attempt to ascertain from this "seven times" the length of the times of the Gentiles as some do lacks the support of Scripture. The seven times mean seven years.

by judgment, and then follows restoration and the acknowledgement of the Most High.

That nothing more is now reported of Nebuchadnezzar, that the last which we hear of him in Scripture is his acknowledgment of the Most High, is also not without meaning. It foreshadows the universal acknowledgment of God in the Kingdom which the God of heaven will set up, when the stone fills as the mountain the whole earth.

CHAPTER V.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

1. Belshazzar's Licentious Feast. Verses 1-4.
2. The Writing on the Wall. Verses 5-9.
3. Forgotten Daniel. Verses 10-16.
4. The Message of Daniel. Verses 17-31.

1. Belshazzar's Licentious Feast: Verses 1-4. This feast of wickedness and blasphemy needs no further annotations. But it shows the great decline morally in the great Babylonian empire. Nebuchadnezzar, no doubt, had handled the golden vessels of the house of the Lord most carefully. He had stored them away, fearing to misuse them. The grandson sent for these vessels to drink out of them wine with his harlots and to praise his idols.

2. The Writing on the Wall: Verses 5-9. A mysterious finger then wrote over against the candlestick on the wall. The king saw plainly the part of the hand that wrote. The feast of licentiousness became suddenly a feast of gloom and consternation. Nor could the astrologers and wise men read the writing which had appeared on the wall.

3. Forgotten Daniel: Verses 10-16. At this point the Queen, the aged widow of Nebuchadnezzar, appeared on the scene and called attention to an old man, who played such an important part during the reign of her husband. Daniel is sent for.

4. The Message of Daniel: Verses 17-31. Daniel refused the honors of the king. He knew that ere long the blaspheming king would be no more. And Daniel was more than an interpreter of the handwriting on the wall.

He is God's prophet and messenger, as a reading of this portion of the chapter shows.

This chapter reveals the blasphemous character of the end of the Babylonian monarchy. Blasphemy, rejection of God's Truth are about us on all sides. There is a "Mene, Mene, Tekel" for apostate Christendom and for that final phase of Babylon as revealed in Rev. xvii and xviii.

CHAPTER VI.

UNDER DARIUS THE MEDE. DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN.

1. The Decree of Darius. Verses 1–9.
2. Daniel's Faith and Steadfastness. Verses 10–15.
3. Daniel Cast into the Lion's Den, and the Deliverance. Verses 16–24.
4. The Degree of Darius. Verses 25-28.

1. The Decree of Darius: Verses 1-9. From the opening of this chapter we learn that Daniel also held a very high position in the beginning of the second monarchy, which had conquered Babylonia. He was preferred above all the other presidents and princes. This created jealousy. They devised a very cunning plan and made the king sign a decree, which they were sure Daniel would break. Inasmuch as the law of the Persians and Medes was irrevocable they were sure that the hated old man would be cast into the lion's den.

2. Daniel's Faith and Steadfastness: Verses 10-15. It is a beautiful scene. When Daniel knew the decree had been signed, he went calmly back into his house and with his windows open towards Jerusalem he prayed and gave thanks to the Lord. He looked away from earthly circumstances and looked to the omnipotent One. The accusation followed. The king now discovers that he is in a desperate condition. His law demands that Daniel be cast to the lions, but his heart filled with love for Daniel would have liked to save him, but he found no way of delivering him.

Well may we think here of another Law and another Love. God, a holy and righteous God and a God of love, found a way to save man. God's holy Law condemns man, who is a sinner and the curse of the law rests upon him.

God's Love is set upon the world, and He "so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The curse of the Law came upon Him who knew no sin and who was made sin for us, and therein is Love manifested. Daniel is cast into the lions' den as our blessed Lord was given to the lion (Psalm xxii:21), and a stone is laid upon the mouth of the den and it is sealed with the King's signet. He is so to speak in a grave, as good as dead in the eyes of the world, for who has ever heard of hungry lions not devouring a man. And all this brings before us that other place, the tomb in the garden, where He was laid and the stone before it, which bore the seal of the Roman world power. But as Daniel could not be hurt by the lions, so He who went into the jaws of death could not be holden by death. The tomb is empty and He is victor over death and the grave. All this is blessedly foreshadowed in this experience of God's prophet.

The Lord in whom Daniel trusted and whom he served delivered him from the lions. His accusers and their families were given to the ferocious beasts, which devoured them at once.

4. The Decree of Darius: Verses 25-28. King Darius also acknowledged the God of Daniel.

The final characteristic of the times of the Gentiles is man worship. The heads of these empires including the Roman Caesars claimed divine honors. Papal Rome also puts up man as the viceregent of the Lord. And all about us we find the deification of man. Finally there comes the head of all this apostasy, the son of perdition, the man of sin, who demands worship for himself (2 Thessalonians ii).

II. THE GREAT PROPHECIES OF DANIEL.

Chapters vii-xii.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NIGHT VISIONS OF DANIEL.

1. The Night Vision of the Three Beasts. Verses 1–6.
2. The Night Vision of the Fourth Beast. Verses 7–8.

3. The Judgment Vision. Verses 9–12.
4. The Son of Man and His Kingdom. Verses 13-14.
5. The Interpretation of the Visions Given. Verses 15-28.

1. The Night Vision of the Three Beasts. Verses 1-6. The sea in the vision is the type of nations (Rev. xvii:15). The three first beasts he saw represented the same great monarchies which were shown to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream by the gold, silver and brass. The lion Daniel saw first rising out of the sea stands for the Babylonian empire symbolized by the lion (Jere. iv:7). The plucking of the wings and the man's heart must refer to Nebuchadnezzar's insanity and restoration (chapter iv). The bear is the emblem of the Medo-Persian monarchy (corresponding to the chest of silver in the image). One side of the bear was raised up, higher than the other, because the Persian element was the strongest. The three ribs denote the conquest of three provinces by this power. The leopard with four heads and wings is the picture of the great Alexandrine empire, the Graeco-Macedonian (corresponding to the belly and thighs of brass in the image).

The four wings denote its swiftness, the four heads the partition of this empire into the kingdoms of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia and Asia Minor. It is seen in the next chapter as the rough he-goat with a notable horn (Alexander the Great) and the little horn (Antiochus Epiphanes). The fourth beast was not seen in the first vision. Before we turn to the second night vision of the Prophet we call attention to the fact that in the selection of beasts to represent these world powers who domineer the times of the Gentiles, God tells us that their moral character is beastly. The lion devours, the bear crushes, the leopard springs upon its prey.

2. The Night Vision of the Fourth Beast: Verses 7-8. This represents Rome, corresponding to the two legs of iron and the ten horns with the little horn between has the same meaning as the ten toes on the feet of the image. The little horn we find more fully mentioned in another portion of this chapter. Thus the prophet beheld the same mon-

archies revealed in the second chapter under the emblem of ferocious beasts. Such the nations are and in their standards and national emblems they have borne witness to their beastly characters. Notice also here the same process of deterioration as in the image. The monarchies degenerate from lion to bear, from bear to leopard and then into a great nondescript.

3. The Judgment Vision: Verses 9-12. This vision bring us to the close of the times of the Gentiles. When the fourth beast with the ten horns and the little horn, the last thing spoken of this world empire, is in full swing, then the end comes. It is a great judgment scene which is here before us. How different the end of this age as revealed in the Word and as it is believed in Christendom. The great mass knows nothing whatever about this age coming to an end. It will go on indefinitely, so they believe, and its future is world progress, better times and the triumph of the Christian civilization. But others concede that a judgment must come and they think of the judgment here as the universal judgment, the great white throne judgment. This judgment is not the last judgment at all. It is a judgment which precedes the final judgment by 1,000 years. This judgment here must be read in connection with passages like Matthew xxv:31-46 and Rev. xix:19-21. In reading the last passage no one can doubt that we have the same judgment here revealed to Daniel. But who is the One who occupies the central place in this vision of judgment? There can be but one answer. It is our ever blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. John v:22 gives the conclusive answer: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The Ancient of Days is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is still more demonstrated if we turn to John's great Patmos vision.

4. The Son of Man and His Kingdom: Verses 13-14. These words are so plain that every Christian knows what they mean. They describe the second coming of Christ and the Kingdom He then receives from the Father's hands. If this passage were more considered, Christians would

stop speaking about the kingdom now. No kingdom till Christ comes again. Both the judgment vision and the vision of His coming to receive the kingdom correspond to the stone which smites the image and as a mountain fills the whole earth.

4. The Interpretations of the Visions given: Verses 15-28. First, Daniel hears about the four beasts. But there is a significant statement in verse 18, the Saints of the most High receiving the kingdom.

Who are the Saints of the Most High? The fact that the term "Most High" is in the plural and may also be translated with "The most high or heavenly places" has led some expositors to say that the Saints are the same who are seen in the Epistle to the Ephesians in which "the heavenly places" are repeatedly mentioned: in other words, the Saints which compose the church. It is true the church will be with the Lord in Glory and "we shall reign over the earth," but this does not necessarily mean that the Saints here represent the church. There are other Saints besides "Church Saints." The Saints of whom Daniel was thinking were his own beloved people. To that people is promised a kingdom in the days of the Messiah. With Him, the Lord in Glory, there is a heavenly people, so as Messiah and the Son of Man in connection with the earth He has an earthly people, Saints which will receive and possess with Him that kingdom which will fill the whole earth. These Saints are the Godfearing Jews, who pass through the great tribulation and inherit the blessings and promises which God gave through their own prophets.

Another important matter is the little horn of whom now Daniel hears more fully. The ten horns are kings and the little horn in their midst will be the final imperial head of the revived Roman empire, that world domineering person of whom we read repeatedly in the Word of God. He must be distinguished from another one, the personal anti-Christ, the man of sin and son of perdition. In Revelation the revived Roman Empire is seen in chapter xiii: 1-10, and the second beast which John saw rising from the

sea is the false Christ having two horns like a lamb but speaking like a dragon (Rev. xiii:11, etc.). A closer study of these coming leaders of the end time is needed to understand the details; here we but point the way. Our larger work on Daniel will give help on all these chapters.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RAM AND THE HE-GOAT.

1. The Vision. Verses 1-14.
2. The Interpretation of the Vision. Verses 15-27.

1. The Vision: Verses 1-14. Beginning with this chapter to the end of the book prophecy will lead us mostly upon Jewish ground. While some of these prophecies were fulfilled in the past, most of them are related to the future when the great end fulfillment takes place before the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven to receive the kingdom. The phrases "the latter times," "the time of the end," "in the last end of the indignation," appear several times in these chapters. These phrases describe the same period of time mentioned in the seventh chapter, "a time, times and dividing of times;" the 1,260 days or 43 months in the book of Revelation. It is the great tribulation which is recorded in the last chapter of this book.

The time and place of the vision in this chapter are given in the beginning. The Ram, according to divine interpretation (verses 15, etc.), is the Medo-Persian monarchy —the silver kingdom, the kingdom also typified by the bear. The He-goat with a notable horn is the Graeco-Macedonian monarchy and the notable horn is Alexander the Great. In 334 B. C., Alexander leaped like a swift he-goat across the Hellespont and fought his successful battles, then pushed on to the banks of the Indus and the Nile and then onward to Shushan. The great battles of the Granicus, Issus and Arbella were fought, and he stamped the power of Persia and its King, Darius Codomannus, to the ground. He conquered rapidly Syria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Tyre, Gaza, Egypt, Babylonia, Persia. In 329 he conquered Bactria, crossed the Oxus and Jaxaitis and defeated the

Scythians. And thus he stamped upon the ram after having broken its horns. But when the he-goat had waxed very great, the great horn was broken. This predicted the early and sudden death of Alexander the Great. He died after a reign of 12 years and eight months, after a career of drunkenness and debauchery in 323 B. C. He died when he was but 32 years old. Then four notable ones sprang up in the place of the broken horn. This too has been fulfilled, for the empire of Alexander was divided into four parts. Four of the great generals of Alexander made the division namely, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy. The four great divisions were, Syria, Egypt, Macedonia and Asia Minor.

Then a little horn appeared out of one of these divisions; it sprung up out of Syria. This little horn is of course not the little horn mentioned in the previous chapter, for the little horn in Daniel vii has its place in connection with the fourth beast (Rome), while this one comes from a division of the third beast, the Graeco-Macedonian monarchy.

History does not leave us in doubt of how and when this great prophetic vision was fulfilled. This little horn is the eighth king of the Seleucid dynasty. He is known by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes; after his wild and wicked deeds he was called Epimanes, the madman. Long before he invaded the pleasant land (Israel's land), Daniel saw what he would do. He conquered Jerusalem. He took away the daily sacrifice in the temple and offered a swine and swine's blood upon the altar. He introduced idol worship, devastated the whole land and killed some 100,000 Jews.

In verses 13-14 is an angelic conversation. The 2,300 days (literal days) cover just about the period of time during which Antiochus did his wicked deeds. When they were ended Judas Maccabaeus cleansed the sanctuary about December 25, 165 B. C.

We believe these 2,300 days are therefore literal days and have found their literal fulfillment in the dreadful days of this wicked king from the North. There is no other

meaning attached to these days and the foolish speculations that these days are years, etc., lacks scriptural foundation altogether. Such views and fanciful interpretations bring the study of Prophecy into disrepute. We have special reference to the Seventh Day Adventist delusion. They teach the abominable falsehood that the Lord Jesus Christ did not enter into the Holiest till the year 1844 had been reached, because this is according to their reckoning 2,300 years after Cyrus had issued the command to build the temple. That this is a denial of the Gospel itself and satanic is self-evident.

2. The Interpretation of the Vision: Verses 15-27. Gabriel is the interpreter of the whole vision. It should be carefully studied. It points to a future fulfillment.

Gabriel told Daniel that the vision has a special meaning for the time of the end. Four different expressions are used to denote the time of the final fulfillment of the vision: (1) "The time of the end," viii:17. (2) "The last end of the indignation," viii:19. (3) "The latter time of their kingdom" viii:23. (4) "When the transgressors are come to the full," verse 23.

Once more, at the close of the age, before the Lord comes in visible glory, in the days of the great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, an invasion from the North takes place. Israel's land will once more undergo the horrors of a devastation, foreshadowed by Antiochus Epiphanes. The King of the North, as he is also called in Isaiah's prophecy, "the Assyrian," will do this work. For details and other prophecies relating to this coming event see our exposition of Daniel, pages 102-118.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS.

1. The Time and Occasion of Daniel's Prayer. Verses 1–2.
2. The Prayer. Verses 3-19.
3. The Answer and the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. Verses 20–27.

1. The Time and Occasion of Daniel's Prayer. Verses 1-2. It was in the first year of Darius, of the seed of the

Medes, that Daniel understood by the sacred writings of his people, especially by the prophecy of Jeremiah, that the end of the years of the captivity was at hand. The promises in the Word of God led him at once to seek the face of the Lord and he poured out a wonderful prayer in His presence.

2. The Prayer: Verses 3-19. It has three parts. Verses 4-10: Confession of the failure of his people and acknowledgment of God's covenant mercies. Verses 11-14: The deserved curse as written in the law of Moses. Verses 15-19: Pleadings for mercy to turn away His anger and to remember His city, Jerusalem and His people. Throughout this prayer we read how completely he identified himself with the sins, the failure, the shame and the judgment of the people of God. This is remarkable. As we have seen from the first chapter, he was brought to Babylon when quite young and belonged even then to the believing, God fearing element of the nation. Yet he speaks of the nation's sins, their rebellion, their transgressions of the law and their wicked deeds as if they belonged to him. Of all the Bible characters Daniel appears as the purest. The failures of Abraham, Moses, Aaron, David and others are recorded, but Daniel appears with no flaw whatever in his character. As far as the record goes he was a perfect man. Of course he too was "a man of like passions" as we are, and as such a sinner. Yet this devoted and aged servant with such a record of loyalty to God and to His laws confesses all the people's sins and the curse and shame, which came upon them as His own.

3. The Answer and the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks: Verses 20-27. The prayer was not ended. How near heaven is may be learned from verses 20-32. Heaven is not far away, for there is no space and no distance with God. When Daniel began his confession and humiliation the Lord called Gabriel and instructed him what he should tell the praying prophet, and then Gabriel was caused to fly swiftly through the immeasurable space, and before Daniel ever reached the "Amen" the messenger stood

before him and stopped his prayer. What blessed assurance! The moment we pray in the Spirit and in His Name our voices are heard in the highest heaven.

We give a corrected text of the great prophecy, perhaps the greatest in the entire prophetic Word.

Seventy weeks are apportioned out upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to cover iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of the ages, and to seal the vision and prophet, and to anoint the holy of holies. Know therefore and understand: From the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem unto Messiah, the Prince, shall be Seven Weeks and Sixty-two Weeks. The street and the wall shall be built again, even in troublous times. And after the Sixty-two Weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with overflow, and unto the end war, the desolations determined. And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and because of the protection of abominations there shall be a desolator, even until the consummation and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolator (verses 24-27).

The literal translation of the term "seventy weeks" is "seventy-sevens." Now, this word "sevens" translated "weeks" may mean "days" and it may mean "years." What then is meant here, seventy times seven days or seventy times seven years? It is evident that the "sevens" mean year weeks, seven years to each prophetic week. Daniel was occupied in reading the books and in prayer with the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity. And now Gabriel is going to reveal to him something which will take place in "seventy-sevens," which means seventy times seven years. The proof that such is the case is furnished by the fulfillment of the prophecy itself. Now seventy-seven years makes 490 years.

What is to be accomplished. Verse 24 gives the great things which are to be accomplished during these seventy-year weeks or 490 years. They are the following: (1) To finish the transgression. (2) To make an end of sins. (3) To cover iniquity. (4) To bring in the righteousness

of ages. (5) To seal the vision and prophet. (6) To anoint the Holy of Holies.

It must be borne in mind that these things concern exclusively Daniel's people and not Gentiles but the holy city Jerusalem. It is clear that the finishing of transgression, the end of sins and the covering of iniquity has a special meaning for Israel as a nation.

Now, these seventy year-weeks are divided into three parts. The first part consists in seven weeks, that is seven times seven, 49 years. During these 49 years the street and the wall of Jerusalem was to be rebuilt and the complete restoration accomplished. The reckoning of this time begins in the month Nisan, 445 B. C., when the command was given (Nehemiah ii). Then follows the second division consisting of 62 weeks of years, that is sixty-two times seven, 434 years. At the close of these 434 years, or 483 years reckoned from the month Nisan in 445 B. C., Messiah the Prince should be cut off and have nothing. Messiah the Prince is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Here then is a startling prediction of the death of Christ, the Messiah rejected by His people and not receiving the kingdom which belongs to Him as the Son of David. The sixty-two weeks, or 434 years, expired on the day our Lord rode into Jerusalem for the last time; during that week He was crucified.*

*For full proof see "The Coming Prince," by Anderson, and our book on the Prophet Daniel.

THE SEVENTY PROPHETIC YEAR WEEKS OF DANIEL'S PROPHECY.

Seven Weeks	Sixty-two Weeks—434 Years		The Great Unreckoned Period	The Last Week—7 Years	
49 years later the street and wall built. Artaxerxes in the month Nisan gives edict to rebuild Jerusalem 445 B.C.	From the word to restore and build Jerusalem seven weeks and sixty-two weeks (483 years) till Messiah the Prince.	End of 69th week, April 10, 32 A.D.	The Romans under Titus destroy the City and Sanctuary, 70 A.D.	First half, 3½ years, 1260 days.	Roman Prince (little horn, Dan. vii) makes a covenant with the Jews.
			Jews are scattered among all nations.		Jewish people fully restored and temple worship resumed.
	The 69 weeks, or 483 years, expired A.D. 32.		Jerusalem trodden down.		Many other predicted events in Prophets and Revel. fulfilled.
			Desolations till the end.		The covenant broken.
	In the week they expired Christ died on the cross as predicted. Messiah shall be cut off and shall have nothing.		The mystery hid in former ages made known (The Church).	The Middle of the Week	
			World-wide preaching of the Gospel.	Second half, 3½ years, 1260 days The Great Tribulation.	Sacrifices and Oblations cease.
			Apostasy of Christendom.		Antichrist in Jerusalem.
			Part of the Jewish nation returns to the land in unbelief. (Zionism.)		Image set up and its worship demanded.
			Next and Final Event in this Unreckoned Period		Great Tribulation.
			The coming of the Lord for His Saints. Dead Saints raised and living Saints changed. 1 Thess. iv:13–18.		Jerusalem in distress.
					The little horn (Dan. viii), the king with fierce countenance.
					The Lord appears to deliver His people.

The end of the seventieth week brings in the Righteousness of ages through the second coming of the Lord. The kingdom established. All vision and Prophecy fulfilled. Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Universal peace. Nations learn war no more.

Then we have a remarkable prediction concerning the fate of Jerusalem after the nation rejected the Lord Jesus Christ: "And the people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with an overflow, and unto the end war, the desolations determined." Who is "the Prince that shall come?" Expositors have erred seriously in making of this prince the Lord Jesus Christ. This Prince is not our Lord. It is the little horn predicted in Daniel vii to rise out of the Roman Empire in the time of the end, when the Roman Empire is revived politically and has its ten horns. Therefore "**the people** of the prince that shall come" are the Roman people. Here then is a prediction that the Romans were to take the city and burn the sanctuary. How literally this has been fulfilled! And all this was revealed when the Roman Empire was not yet in existence. Such are the marvels of Divine prophecy. After that there are to to be wars and desolations for Jerusalem and the Jewish people. It is the same that our Lord predicted when He said: "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations" (Luke xxi:24).

But all this leaves seven years, that is one week, unaccounted for. We have up to now 483 weeks, and there are to be 490 years. The last week of seven years is still future. The course of the Jewish age was interrupted. It is an unfinished age. Between the 483 years which ended when the nation rejected the Lord of glory and the beginning of the last seven years of the Jewish age, this last year-week is this present age, the unreckoned period of time during which God does His great work in sending forth the Gospel of His Grace to the Gentile nations, to gather out of them a people for His Name. This age of Grace is still on but it will end some day when God's purpose is accomplished. Then the true church will be gathered home to glory and the Lord will turn again to His people Israel and the last week of Daniel will pass into history. During these seven years the Prince that shall come, the little horn of Daniel vii, will enter into a covenant with the Jewish people. Not with

all of them, for there is a remnant of godly Jews who will not accept this one (indicated by the expression "the many" —see correct translation). In the middle of the week he breaks that covenant and the result will be the great tribulation, the time, times and half of a time, 1,260 days, 42 months of Daniel vii and Rev. xiii. When this great tribulation ends the Lord Jesus Christ comes back and the great things mentioned in verse 24 will be accomplished.

CHAPTER X.

THE PREPARATION FOR THE FINAL PROPHECY.

This chapter contains the preface to the final great prophecies as found in the last two chapters of this book. The certain man who appeared unto Daniel at the banks of the river Hiddekel (Tigris) was the Lord. Compare with Revelation i, where John, the beloved disciple, beheld Him in a vision of glory. Daniel's vision is a pre-incarnation vision of the same One whom John beheld after His resurrection and in His glorified humanity.

The delayed answer by the angelic messenger is explained by the power of darkness. A powerful demon-prince, a satanic agency, having control over Persia, so that he claimed the title the prince of Persia, kept back the answer. Then the prophet was strengthened.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WARS OF THE PTOLEMIES AND SELEUCIDAE PREDICTED, THE COMING EVENTS OF THE END.

1. The Wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae. Verses 1-35.
2. The Time of the End. The Man of Sin. Verses 36-45.

1. The Wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae: Verses 1-35. Here we have history prewritten and the greater part of this chapter (verses 2-35) is fulfilled historically. So accurate are these predictions and their subsequent fulfillment that the enemies of "the Scripture of Truth" have declared that it could never have been written by Daniel several hundred years before these persons came into existence and fought their battles. The pagan Porphyry in the

third century in his "Treatise against Christians" bitterly attacked the belief that Daniel wrote these predictions. He argued that all was written after the events had taken place. The same arguments are used by the critics. Such is this most subtle infidelity that it can make use of the statements of a poor heathen in opposition to the divine revelation.

The prophecies given here were minutely fulfilled during the years 301 B. C., to 168 B. C. History verifies everything. The history covers a good part of the Persian and Graeco-Macedonian Empires, but mostly the wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae. Artaxerxes, Darius, Alexander the Great, Ptolemy Lagris, the King of the South, Ptolemy Euergetes, Seleucus Calinicus, Ptolemy Philopater, Antiochus Epiphanes, even the Roman fleet (the ships of Chittim), all enter into this prophecy. A detailed exposition of the prophecy and its fulfillment would fill many pages. (See the Exposition on Daniel pages 168-179).

Before we pass on we desire to say again that all in these verses we have briefly followed has been historically fulfilled. We point out a mistake in which some have fallen. In verse 31 we read of "the abomination that maketh desolate." Our Lord in His Olivet discourse (Matthew xxiv:15) said: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand)." Some believe that when our Lord spoke these words he referred to Daniel xi: 31, and that this is the abomination of desolation. This is not quite correct. The abomination that maketh desolate of verse 31 is past and happened in the days of the atrocities committed by Antiochus Epiphanes. The abomination of desolation to which our Lord refers is mentioned in chapter xii:11, and it points, as we shall find later, to the abomination set up by the Antichrist, the second beast, in the middle of the week. The typical meaning of Antiochus Epiphanes and his crimes in the land of Judea and against Jerusalem we have already learned in connection with chapter viii.

2. The Time of the End. The Man of Sin: Verses 36–

45. The time of the end is mentioned in verse 35. What is to befall Daniel's people in the latter days as Daniel was told in chapter x:14 is now revealed. Between verses 35 and 36 we must put a long and unreckoned period of time. Antiochus Epiphanes and the victorious Maccabees end the historical fulfillment of the predictions of the great prophecies in the first part of this chapter, and since then over 2,000 years have come and gone and the fulfillment of verses 36–45 have not yet been. First we read of a wilful King. Who is this king so fully pictured in verses 36–45?

Many expositors of Daniel apply this passage to Antiochus Epiphanes, because they see not the important interval which exists between verses 35 and 36. However, a closer examination of the description of this King shows that he cannot be Antiochus. He is another person altogether, and as we shall see later, will be a Jew and assume Kingly honors in the midst of the Jewish people. Antiochus was a Gentile. Others again identify this King with the first beast in Revelation xiii, and say that the head of the revived Roman Empire, one like Napoleon I is meant, while others see here a reference to the pope in Rome. And whether the head of the Roman power, or the pope, or perhaps Mohammed, the term Antichrist is freely applied to each. Those who see the Papacy here and the Romish corruption make some startling applications which are extremely fanciful.

The Wilful King is the Antichrist. The Jewish people rejected their King, the Messiah, who came to His own, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord told the Jews: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John v:43). This other one has not yet come. We have his photograph here. He appears in Israel's land in the time of the end as a counterfeit Messiah and takes also the place of King in their midst. This wilful King, the personal Antichrist who deceives the apostate mass of the Jewish people, is repeatedly mentioned in the Old Testament prophetic Word. Isaiah speaks of him and his end (Isa. xxx:33, lvii:9). Zechariah calls him "the idol shepherd" (Zech. xi:15–17).

He is repeatedly mentioned in the Psalms as "the wicked man"—"the man of the earth"—"the bloody and deceitful man." In the Book of Revelation he appears as the second beast out of the land (Palestine) (Rev. xiii:11–17). The two horns like a lamb as he is described there show clearly that he imitates Christ. He has the spirit of the dragon and appears as a religious leader, for this reason he is also called "the false prophet" in the Book of Revelation (chapters xvi:13, xix:20, xx:10).

In the New Testament he is called in the writings of John "the Antichrist". (See 1 John ii:18–22, iv:3; 2 John 7). Another great prophecy of the same person is found in 2 Thess. ii, where he is called "the man of sin, the son of perdition." The early church believed that this evil person will be a real man, a Jew, and be energized by Satan. That he is the papal system or something else was invented later.

In verses 40–45 we have a prophecy of the wars and conflicts during the time of the end. The false King, Israel's false Messiah, the Antichrist, plays an important part in these conflicts. Then there are the kings of the South and of the North. The king of the South comes out of Egypt. His antagonist is the king of the North. The king of the South will be overthrown by the powerful king of the North, the same who is typified by the Antiochus Epiphanes. (Read about this invasion in Joel ii and Zechariah xiv.)

While the King of the North and his proud hosts are thus overthrown by the Army of the Lord, what becomes of the wilful King, the Antichrist in the City? The King of the North cannot touch him. But the Lord Himself will deal with that wicked one. "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii:8). Thus ends the great conflict of the time of the end. The eternal abode of the satanic instruments of the time of the end, the beast, that coming Prince, the Antichrist and the King of the North will be the lake of fire.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE.

"And at that time." What time? The time of the end, the time of trouble such as never was before; the same time to which our Lord refers in Matthew xxiv:21.

Michael, the great prince which standeth for the Jewish people, is now also mentioned again. He will stand up and take a leading part in the events of that time. From the Book of Revelation we learn (chapter xii) that there will be war in heaven, that is where Satan has his dominion now as the prince of the power of the air. Michael, assisted by his angels, will cast out the great dragon, the devil and his angels. They will be forced down to the earth. Then when Satan and his angels are cast out the great tribulation will be instituted (Rev. xii:12). Michael will stand up in another sense and take a definite part in the deliverance of Daniel's people. It is not fully revealed what that will be.

The deliverance of which we read in these verses and the awakening of those "who sleep in the dust of the earth" has likewise been grossly misinterpreted. Because expositors have not seen the application of all this to the Jews in their future history in the land, they have read the church in here, and even what they term a general resurrection on a general judgment day. But we shall see now what is meant by the deliverance of Daniel's people.

Physical resurrection (as so often stated: a general resurrection) is not taught in the second verse. Physical resurrection is used as a figure of the national revival of Israel in that day. They have been sleeping nationally in the dust of the earth, buried among the Gentiles. But at that time there will take place a national restoration, a bringing together of the house of Judah and of Israel. It is the same figure as used in the vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel xxxvii. This vision is employed by the men, who have invented the theory of a second chance and larger hope for the wicked dead to back up their evil teaching, but anyone can see that it concerns not the Gentiles but the Jewish people and that it is not a bodily resurrection but a national revival and

restoration of that people. Their national graves, not literal burying places, will be opened and the Lord will bring them forth out of all the countries into which they have been scattered.

There will be two classes, the godly and the ungodly. The ungodly accept the false Messiah, and in their national revival, shame and everlasting contempt awaits them, while the others, the godly, will enjoy life in the kingdom. The wise in verse 3 are the Jewish teachers and witnesses in the endtime, those which compose the godly remnant. A special reward will be theirs during the kingdom, they shall shine as the stars forever. The same holds good, only in a higher sense for all those who are witnesses for Him during this age, who are faithful to Christ.

Then Daniel is addressed and beholds angels once more, as well Him who appeared clothed in linen, none other than the Lord. Then Daniel asked his final question.

Verses 11–12 have puzzled many readers of the book. Different theories are given.

But what is the meaning of these 1,290 and 1,335 days? Can there be anything plainer than the fact that these 1,290 and 1,335 days are literal days? Who authorizes us to make of these days years? By what process of exposition are we to arrive at the conclusion that "days" mean "years?" It is worse than folly to do that.

Now, the great tribulation lasts for 1,260 days. But here we have 30 days or a whole month added. The Lord will be manifested at the close of the great tribulation of 1,260 days, 3½ years. Matthew xxiv:29–31 teaches us this. The extra month will in all probability be needed to make possible certain judgment events especially with the overthrow of the nations which came against Jerusalem and the judgment of nations as given in Matthew xxv:31. We cannot speak dogmatically on all this. But certain it is that 1,335 days after the Antichristian abomination had been set up in Jerusalem, that is, 75 days, or 1½ months beyond the time of the great tribulation, the full blessing for Israel and the establishment of the glorious rule of Israel's King, the

once rejected Lord Jesus Christ, will have come, for it is written, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred and five and thirty days." This is as far as any teacher can safely go, and here we would rest.

HOSEA

The Prophet Hosea

INTRODUCTION

The Minor Prophets begin with the Book of Hosea. There are twelve of these books which are called by the name "minor prophets" not because their contents are of less authority than the preceding prophetic books, but on account of their size. The Jews considered them one book and the Talmud says of them, "our fathers made them one book, that they might not perish on account of their littleness." The term "minor prophets" was used by the church in early days. Augustinus states: "The prophet Isaiah is not in the books of the twelve prophets who are therefore called minor, because their discourses are brief in comparison with those who are called 'greater' because they composed considerable volumes." Jewish tradition claims that the present arrangement was made by the great synagogue formed by Ezra. This arrangement is not chronological. Joel precedes Hosea, while Hosea, Amos and Jonah were nearly contemporary; Obadiah is difficult to place. The introduction to the book enters into the question of date. Micah, the Morasthite, ministered between the years 757 and 699 B. C. Nahum, the complement and counterpart of the book of Jonah, also prophesied during the period of Isaiah. Habakkuk is later than the preceding prophets. He speaks of the invasion of the land by the Chaldeans as imminent; his prophetic office was probably exercised during the second half of Manasseh's reign. Zephaniah prophesied under the reign of Josiah, between 642 and 611 B. C. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are post-exilic.

HOSEA AND HIS TIMES

The first verse of the book determines the period of Hosea. He prophesied while Uzziah was reigning in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel, as well as during the time when Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were kings over Judah. His whole prophetic ministry covers probably over seventy years, so that he must have reached a very old age. His prophecy is directed almost exclusively to the house of Israel, which had degenerated in a short time and Hosea lived during these awful years. Jeroboam II was almost the last king who ruled by the appointment of the Lord. After him kings made their way to the tottering throne of Israel by murdering their predecessors. Shallum slew Zechariah; Menahem slew Shallum; Pekah killed the son of Menahem; Hosea killed Pekak. All was anarchy in Israel.

The religious conditions were still worse. Nearly all these usurpers had made alliances with foreign powers which resulted in the in-

troduction of the immoral, corrupt Phoenician and Syrian idolatry. The first Jeroboam had set up a rival worship so that the people would not go to Jerusalem to worship in the divinely appointed way. Jeroboam had been in Egypt (1 Kings xi:40; xii:2) where he had seen nature worshipped in the form of a calf. This worship he introduced in the identical words which their fathers had used when they worshipped the golden calf in the wilderness. (See Exodus xxxii:4 and 1 Kings xii:28). Outwardly the different ceremonies of the law, the feasts of Jehovah, the new moons and Sabbath days, the sacrifices and offerings were maintained, but all was a corrupt worship. The calf was the immediate object of that idolatrous worship. They sacrificed to the calf (1 Kings xii:32); they kissed the calf (Hosea xiii:2) and swore by these idol-calves (Amos viii:14). As Dr. Pusey states: "Calf-worship paved the way for the coarser and more cruel worship of nature, under the names of Baal and Ashtaroth, with all their abominations of consecrated child sacrifices, and horrible sensuality." It led to the most awful sins and degradation. Here is a description of the moral conditions prevailing in the days of Hosea, a condition brought about by the false worship and departure from God. Hosea and Amos acquaint us with it. All was falsehood (Hosea iv:1; vii:1, 3); adultery (Hosea iv:11, vii:4, ix:10); bloodshed (Hosea v:2; vi:8); excess and luxury were supplied by secret or open robbery (Hosea iv:2; x:13; xi:12; iv:11; vii:5; vi:4-6; Amos iv:1); oppression (Hosea xii:7; Amos iii:9-10); false dealing (Hosea xii:7; Amos viii:5); perversion of justice (Hosea x:4; Amos ii:6, 7); grinding of the poor (Amos ii:7, viii:6). Adultery was consecrated as an act of worship and religion (Hosea iv:14). The people, the king and the priests were all steeped in debauchery. Corruption had spread everywhere; even the places once sacred through Jehovah's revelation, Bethel, Gilgal, Gilead, Mizpah, Shechem, were special scenes of vileness and wickedness. Remonstrance was useless for the knowledge of Jehovah was wilfully rejected; they hated rebuke. To understand the message of Hosea and Amos these conditions, both religious and moral, must be fully understood.

THE MESSAGE OF HOSEA

Like the message of other prophets Hosea's message is one of judgment and future mercy. He announced the coming judgment as certain and irreversible. They were to be led away into captivity. His sons and daughters born to him by Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, expressed this coming judgment in their names which were given to them by divine direction. "Lo-Ruhamah"—I will have no mercy; and "Lo-Ammi"—not my people. Then he announced in the name of the Lord, "I will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease;" "I will have no more mercy upon the house of Israel:" "They

shall be wanderers among the nations;"—"They shall not dwell in the Lord's land;"—"Israel is swallowed up; she shall be among the nations like a vessel in which is no pleasure." In the greater portion of his message there is an exposure of the people's moral condition and their impenitent state.

But there is also the message of mercy, which is found in the very beginning of the book. Here are a few of these comforting words, which still await their fulfillment in the day when they shall "seek the Lord their God, and David their King (the Messiah); and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days" (iii:5):—"I will betroth her to me forever;"—"They shall fear the Lord and His goodness;"—"He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight;"—"Till He come and rain righteousness upon you;"—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death;"—"I will heal their backsliding;"—"I will be as the dew unto Israel, He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth its roots as Lebanon."

"It belongs to the mournful solemnity of Hosea's prophecy that he scarcely speaks to the people in his own person. The ten chapters, which form the center of the prophecy, are almost wholly one long dirge of woe, in which the prophet rehearses the guilt and the punishment of his people. If the people are addressed, it is, with very few exceptions, God Himself, not the Prophet, Who speaks to them; and God speaks to them as their judge. Once only does the prophet use the form so common in other prophets "saith the Lord." As in the three first chapters, the prophet, in relation to his wife, represented the relation of God to His people, so, in these ten chapters, after the first words of the fourth and fifth chapters;—"Hear the word of the Lord, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land;"—"Hear ye this, O priests;'—whenever the prophet uses the first person, he uses it not of himself, but of God. "I,"—"My,"—are not Hosea, and the things of Hosea, but God and what belongs to God. God addresses the prophet in the second person. In four verses only of these chapters does the prophet himself apparently address His own people Israel, in two expostulating with them (ix:1, 5); in two calling them to repentance (x:12 and xii:6). In two other verses he addresses Judah, and foretells their judgment mingled with mercy (iv:13). The last chapter alone is one of almost unmingled brightness; the prophet calls to repentance, and God in His own person accepts it, and promises large supply of grace."*

We learn then from the message of this book, what is so largely written in all the prophets, that their is a glorious future in store for all Israel. Judah and Israel both will receive the promised blessing

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*Dr. Pusey on Hosea.

and glory in that day when the King comes back, when Ephraim joyfully cries out "I have seen Him" (xiv:8).

The conditions in Israel also find their counterpart in our own times. Christendom has turned its back in greater part upon the true worship, rejects the truth, yea the highest and the best God has given, the Gospel of Christ, hence the moral decline and apostasy and ere long a greater judgment than that which fell upon Israel.

The Division of Hosea

Hosea (meaning Salvation) in his style is abrupt and sententious. As already stated in the introduction he is the prophet of the ten tribes, though Judah is also mentioned by him. The book begins with two symbolical actions commanded by Jehovah, to illustrate Israel's adulterous condition and Jehovah's enduring love for His people in spite of their faithlessness. This is followed by a terse prophecy as to the condition of the people for many days and their return in the latter days (chapters i-iii).

The main portion of the book begins with the fourth chapter. This part begins with "Hear the Word of the Lord." In this section their religious and moral degradation through the priests and their coming ruin is announced. Then follows a description of the judgment which was to come upon Ephraim (the house of Israel) and also upon Judah. This is beheld by the prophet in a solemn vision (v:8-15), followed by a brief prophecy as to what will take place when the remnant of Israel returns unto the Lord (vi:1-3). Then the Lord reproves them for their inconstancy, their immorality, their lewd priests. From chapter vii to xiii we have similar remonstrances, with renewed announcements of the judgments on account of their wickedness, idolatries, leagues with heathen nations; the judgment is to be exile. What is to be their lot is predicted. This punishment is not to be delayed; it will, however, not destroy them, but purge them, leaving a remnant. The last chapter is one of gracious promise of what will take place in the day of their return. The division of this book is therefore twofold.

I. **THE REJECTION OF ISRAEL AS AN ADULTEROUS WIFE AND HER FUTURE RECEPTION AND RESTORATION.** Chapters i-iii.

II. **THE MESSAGES OF EXPOSTULATION, JUDGMENT AND MERCY.** Chapters iv-xiv.

There are different subdivisions which will be pointed out and followed in the analysis and annotations.

The Book of Hosea is quoted a number of times in the New Testament. See Matt. ii:15, ix:13, xii:7; Rom. ix:25, 26; 1 Cor. xv:55; 1 Peter ii:5, 10.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE REJECTION OF ISRAEL AS THE ADULTEROUS WIFE; HER FUTURE RECEPTION AND RESTORATION

Chapters i-iii.

CHAPTER I

ISRAEL'S SIN AND PROMISE OF RESTORATION

1. The Introduction. 1.
2. The Prophet's Marriage and Birth of Jezreel. 2-5.
3. The Birth of Lo-Ruhamah. 6-7.
4. The Birth of Lo-Ammi. 8-9.
5. The Future Restoration. 10-11.

1. The Introduction: Verse 1. This superscription gives the period of Hosea's ministry. First stands the statement that the word of the Lord came to him. Hosea means salvation; his father's name, Beeri, means "my well." Both are typical names. Critics have pointed out that Hosea was undoubtedly a resident of the northern kingdom of Israel, yet he mentions but one of the kings of Israel, Jeroboam, while four kings of Judah are given in this introduction. Inasmuch as Hosea long survived Jeroboam, the king of Israel, and the Judaic kings extend far beyond the time of the one Israelitish king, it has been alleged that the second part of the superscription does not harmonize with the first. Such is not the case. The superscription is made in this manner for some purpose. Hosea marks his prophecy by the names of the kings of Judah, because in Judah the theocracy remained. He mentions Jeroboam (the Second), whose reign ended in the fourteenth year of Uzziah, because he was the last king of Israel through whom God acted and vouchsafed help to the rival kingdom. All the other kings of Israel who came after Jeroboam, by whom the Lord sent deliverance to the ten tribes (2 Kings xiv:27) were therefore

recognized by the prophets of God; the kings which followed were robbers and murderers, whose names the Spirit of God finds unfit to mention in the prophetic ministry of Hosea.

2. The Prophet's Marriage and Birth of Jezreel: Verses 2-5. In the beginning of his ministry, when Hosea was a young man, the Lord commanded him to take unto him a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms, and that for the reason, because the land hath committed great whoredoms, departing from the Lord. This command was at once executed by the prophet; he took to wife Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim.

We are confronted with an interesting question. What is the nature of these transactions? Were they real events, that Hosea literally took this woman and had children by her, or were they nothing but pictorial, visionary illustrations of the spiritual adultery and unfaithfulness of Israel? Did the prophet actually and literally enter into such an impure relationship, or, is it wholly an allegory? Luther supposed that the prophet called his lawful wife and children by these names at a certain time to perform a kind of a drama before the people and thus remind them of their apostasy. The objectors to the literalness of this incident, and defenders of the allegorical explanation, have pointed out that it would be unworthy of God to command and sanction such an unchaste union. The allegorical meaning is entirely excluded by the text, which speaks of a literal transaction. All is related as real history, the marriage and the birth of the children. We quote first Dr. Pusey's words in support of the literal meaning of this command by the Lord.

"We must not imagine things to be unworthy of God, because they do not commend themselves to us. God does not dispense with the moral law, because the moral law has its source in the mind of God Himself. To dispense with it would mean to contradict Himself. But God, who is absolute Lord of all things which He made, may, at His sovereign will, dispose of the lives or things which He created. Thus, as sovereign Judge, He commanded the lives of the Canaan-

ites to be taken by Israel, as, in His ordinary providence, He has ordained that the magistrate should not bear the sword in vain, but has made him His minister, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. So, again, He, whose are all things, willed to repay to the Israelites their hard and unjust servitude by commanding them to spoil the Egyptians. He, who created marriage, commanded to Hosea whom he should marry. The prophet was not defiled by taking as his lawful wife, at God's bidding, one defiled, however hard a thing this was."*

This is the strongest defense of the literal interpretation of this incident. But there is another interpretation possible, which we believe is the correct one. As the context shows the symbolical meaning of Hosea's marriage is to illustrate Israel's unfaithfulness. But Israel was not always unfaithful; she played not always the harlot. Of necessity this had to be symbolized in the case of the prophet's marriage. The question then arises, was Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim an impure woman when Hosea married her, or did she become unchaste after her marriage to the prophet? We believe the latter was the case. The Hebrew does not require the meaning that she was impure at the time of the marriage; in fact, as already indicated, the supposition that Gomer lived the life of a harlot before her marriage to the godly prophet, destroys the parallelism, which the prophet's message embodies, with the relation of God to Israel. The expression "a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms" simply intimated to Hosea what the woman he married was going to be. If not taken in this sense it would mean that Gomer had already children when Hosea married her.

Gomer was called "a wife of whoredoms" by the omniscient Lord, in anticipation of her future conduct. She fell and became immoral after her union with Hosea, and not before. In this way she became a symbol of Israel, married unto the Lord, but afterwards became the unfaithful wife. With

*Pusey on Hosea.

this view, the entire prophetic message of Hosea in the beginning of this book harmonizes. The name of the woman is likewise suggestive. Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, means "Completion—a double cake of figs." Israel's wickedness is symbolized as complete and the double cake of figs is symbolical of sensual pleasures. And the prophet in spite of her unfaithfulness still loved her and did not abandon her. This illustrates Johovah's love for Israel.

Then she bore him a son. Expositors have stated, "The children were not the prophet's own, but born of adultery and presented to him as his." But that can not be the meaning in view of the plain statement "she conceived and bare *him* a son."

The Lord commands him to call this son "Jezreel." Jezreel has likewise a symbolical meaning. It means "God shall scatter" (Jer. xxxi:10); but it also means "God shall sow" (Zech. x:9). Thus Israel was to be scattered and sown among the nations. Jezreel was the valley in which Jehu executed his bloody deeds. On account of his hypocritical zeal, the blood of Jezreel is now to be avenged, and the kingdom of the house of Israel would cease. Thus the name Jezreel (resembling in sound and form "Israel") indicates the speedy end of Israel, scattered and sown among the nations, on account of their whoredoms (see Ezek. xxiii).

3. The Birth of Lo-ruhamah: Verses 6-7. Next a daughter is born. Here "bare him" as found in verse 3 is omitted. The prophet receives a name for her—Lo-ruhamah, which means "not having obtained mercy." Interesting are the two renderings of the Holy Spirit of this passage in the New Testament. In Romans ix:25 it is rendered "not beloved" and in 1 Peter ii:10, "hath not obtained mercy." Love and mercy were now to be withdrawn from Israel and they were to be taken away utterly.

Then the house of Judah is mentioned. They shall be saved by the Lord their God, because He has mercy on them. Their salvation was not by bow, by sword, or by battle, horses and horsemen. It was only a little while later when the Assyrian, who was God's instrument in the execution

of judgment upon Israel, came before the gates of Jerusalem, but Jerusalem was saved in the manner as predicted here, not by bow or sword, but the angel of the Lord smote the army of 185,000 in one night. And later Judah was saved and a remnant brought back from Babylon. Then there is a future salvation for Judah in the end of the age.

4. The Birth of Lo-Ammi: Verses 8-9. Another son is born and "God said, Call his name Lo-Ammi, for ye are not my people and I am not your God." Lo-Ammi means "not my people." Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi are symbolical of Israel's rejection and the withdrawal of God's mercy. That this is not to be permanent the next two verses make this clear.

5. The Future Restoration: Verses 10-11. Abruptly we are transported from the present into the distant future, and a prophetic utterance of great depth follows. The tenth verse is quoted by the Holy Spirit in Romans ix and gives full light on the meaning of the passage here. God's sovereignty is the theme of the ninth chapter of Romans: "And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He has afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As He saith also in Osee (Greek form of Hosea), I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God" (Rom. ix:23-26). Here is the commentary to Hosea i:10. It means first that Israel shall be reinstated; but it also means the call and salvation of the Gentiles, and Gentiles called in sovereign grace are to be constituted "the sons of the living God." It is a prophetic hint on the blessing to come to the Gentiles, and that blessing is greater than Israel's.

The eleventh verse is a great prophecy and remains still unfulfilled. Some expositors claim that it was fulfilled in the return of the remnant of Jews under Zerubbabel. But the Babylonian captivity is not in view here at all. The great

day of Jezreel will come, when King Messiah, our Lord returns. Then shall Judah and Israel be gathered together under one head, and gather once more to their national feasts in the land.

CHAPTER II

APPEAL AND PUNISHMENT FOR UNFAITHFULNESS THE RESUMED RELATIONSHIP

1. The Appeal and Complaint. 1-5.
2. The Punishment for Unfaithfulness. 6-13.
3. The Resumed Relationship and its Great Blessing. 14-23.

1. The Appeal and the Complaint: Verses 1-5. Who is addressed in the first verse of this chapter? Some think the children of the prophet are meant. The godly in Israel, those who obtained mercy, are addressed, for the Lord acknowledges such still as "Ammi"—my people. The godly are to plead with the rest of Israel their mother, but who is disowned by Jehovah as the wife, on account of her adulterous conduct. Then the Lord threatens her with severe punishment because of her unfaithfulness. She is to be stripped naked and be as in the day she was born (see Ezek. xvi:4). Nor would there be mercy for her children because the mother, Israel, continued to go after her lovers.

2. The Punishment for Unfaithfulness: Verses 6-13. Her way is to be hedged up with thorns; a wall of separation is to be raised and to keep her from her lovers. And if she follow after them and make a sinful alliance with them (symbolical of the idol worship of heathens which Israel practised) she would not find them. Thus she might return to her first husband, to Jehovah. Israel had received from the Lord corn, wine, oil, silver and gold. Then they attributed it all to Baal and used it in idol worship. In verses 9-13 the punishment is fully made known. She is to be left alone; the gifts and blessings will be withdrawn; her lewdness is to be uncovered, all mirth will cease and the days of Baalim, spent in licentious worship, would be visited upon her in judgment.

3. The Resumed Relationship and its Great Blessing: Verses 14-23. Immediately after the announcement of her punishment follows the assurance of future mercy. Israel's conversion is promised (verses 14-17) and the great mercies of Jehovah's covenant are to be renewed (verses 18-23). The Lord of Love will not forever abandon His people and though Israel has played the harlot so long, with no willingness to return unto Him, He Himself in infinite love is going to woo her back. He will allure her, as He brings her into the wilderness, and there speak "to her heart" (the Hebrew meaning). That will be in the coming day when the Lord will remember the remnant of His people during the time of Jacob's trouble and save them in that day. Then she will get her vineyards, her place of blessing, promised to Israel as His earthly people. The valley of Achor shall be the door of hope. In that valley Achan died, on account of whom all Israel had fallen under the ban (Josh. vii). There judgment had been enacted and after that blessing was restored to Israel and the ban was removed. Achor means "troubling." When Israel is in that great trouble, the great tribulation, the valley of trouble will become the door of hope, for then the Lord will forgive them their sins, cover them with His grace and redeem them by His power. Then the singing times begin again for Israel. "She shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." Songs of praise on account of accomplished redemption by Jehovah's power will then burst forth (Exod. xv; Isa. xii). She will be fully restored to her former relationship, typified by marriage. "It shall be in that day, saith the Lord, that Thou shalt call Me Ishi (my husband), and shalt call Me no more Baali (my master). She will be re-married to the Lord, symbolically speaking, and become the earthly wife of Jehovah, while the church, the espoused virgin, becomes in glory the Lamb's wife (Rev. xix:6-8).

But greater blessing will be connected with that coming day of blessing, when Israel is received back (Rom. xi:15). Verse 18 tells us that creation will then be blest; the time

of its deliverance has come. Here the same is indicated as in Isaiah xi:6-7 and Romans viii:21. The end of wars comes then and universal peace blesses the whole earth. This is always the order in the divine forecasts. First, Israel has to be brought back, and after that the blessings for the earth and the nations, including that peace, which the blinded world-church tries to secure without the Lord Jesus Christ. All these promises as to the future of Israel, her restoration and spiritual blessings, are unrealized. "It is infatuation to think that all this was fully accomplished in the return of a remnant from the captivity. The result is that even Christians, misled by this miserable error, are drawn away into the rationalistic impiety of counting God's Word here mere hyperbole to heighten the effect, as if the Holy Spirit deigned to be a verbal trickster, or a prophet were as vain as a litterateur. No; it is a brighter day, when the power of God will make a complete clearance from the world of disorder, misrule, man's violence and corruption, as well as reduce to harmless and happy resubjection the entire animal kingdom."

In that day all the great covenant blessings will return to redeemed Israel. Betrothed again to Jehovah in righteousness, in judgment, in faithfulness and mercies, Israel will know Jehovah. There will be an uninterrupted line of blessing from the heavens down to every earthly blessing. Heavens and earth will be gloriously united, and in answer to the call of His people the heavens will hear and cover all with blessing, for Satan's power is now gone. Israel is no more Lo-Ammi, but they will be "His people" and He will be "their God," while the redeemed nation itself will be a blessing in the earth.

CHAPTER III

ISRAEL'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

1. The Past. 1-3.
2. The Present. 4.
3. The Future. 5.

1. The Past: Verses 1-3. The command here is not that the Prophet should enter into relation with another woman, but it concerns the same Gomer, the unfaithful wife. It seems she left the Prophet and lived in adultery with another man. "And Jehovah said unto me, Go again, love a wife, who is beloved of her friend and who is an adulteress; just as Jehovah loves the children of Israel, who have turned towards other gods, and love raisin cakes"* (correct translation). She is not called "thy wife," simply "a wife"; yet the Prophet is told to love the adulterous wife. This woman, whom the Lord commands Hosea to love, he had loved before her fall; he was now to love her after her fall, and while in that condition, in order to save her from abiding in it. It was for her sake that she might be won back to him. Such is the love of Jehovah for Israel.

He bought the adulteress for half of the price of a common slave (see Exod. xxi:32); it denotes her worthlessness. The measure of barley mentioned reminds of the offering of one accused of adultery, and, being the food of animals, shows her degradation likewise. He thus was to buy her back, not to live with him as his wife, but that she might sit as a widow, not running after others, but wait for him during an undefined, but long season, until he would come and take her to himself. While she was not to belong to another man, he, her legitimate husband, would be her guardian. Israel's spiritual adultery is in view in all this.

2. The Present: Verse 4. Here we have direct prophecy, a very remarkable one, as to Israel's present condition. It is to be their state for "many days." These "many days," unreckoned, are the days of this present age, in which Israel is in the predicted condition, while God visits the Gentiles, to gather through the preaching of the Gospel a people for His Name, that is, the church. Their condition is to be threefold: Without a civil polity, without king or prince; without the appointed Levitical worship, no sacrifice; without the practice of idolatry, to which they had been given,

*Used in the idolatrous worship.

without image, ephod and teraphim—the distinctly priestly garment, the ephod; the teraphim, the tutelary divinities, which they used before the captivity. Before the captivity they had kings; now they have none, would have none; after the captivity Judah had princes; no princes during the "many days." The real approach to God according to the Levitical service was to cease, for during the "many days" there would be no sacrifice. This has been Israel's condition for nineteen hundred years. What a wonderful forecast of the present we have here! Clearly then, this describes the present condition of Israel—the most anomalous spectacle the world has ever seen—a people who go on generation after generation without any of those things which are supposed to be essential for keeping a people in existence. They have lost their king, their prince; they have neither the true worship nor the worship of idols. They are unable to present a sacrifice, because they have no temple and no more priesthood. Here is an evidence of the supernaturalness of the Bible, one which no Jew nor destructive critic can deny.

3. The Future: Verse 5. Afterward—in the latter days. These two statements open and end the prophecy concerning their future. The "afterward" is not yet; the latter days are still to come. Their future is returning and seeking the Lord, their God and David their king. This is Christ. Nearly all the rabbinical writers and expositors explain it in this way. David himself this could not be. It is He who is David's Son and David's Lord, our Lord (see Ezek. xxxvii 23, 24). Here we have the prediction of the future conversion of Israel to the Lord, in the latter days, the days of His coming again.*

*The Targum of Jonathan says on Hosea iii:5: "This is the King Messiah; whether he be from among the living or from the dead. His name is Messiah. The same explanation is given by the mystical books Zohar, Midrash Shemuel and Tanchuma. The greatest authorities among the Jews are one in declaring that "the last days" mean the days of the Messiah; we have reference to Kimchi, Abarbanel, Moses Ben Nacham and many others.

II. THE MESSAGE OF EXPOSTULATION JUDGMENT AND MERCY

Chapters iv-xiv

CHAPTER IV

THE LORD'S CONTROVERSY WITH HIS PEOPLE

1. The Condition of the People. 1-5.
2. The Loss of Their Priestly Relation. 6-11.
3. Israel's Idolatry. 12-19.

1. The Condition of the People: Verses 1-5. This chapter begins with a terse description of the condition of the professing people of God. First, we have the negative side—no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God. And there was no truth, because they had rejected the Word of the Lord, hence the result no mercy and no knowledge of God. It is so still whenever and wherever the Word of God is set aside. Then follows the positive evil which was so prominent in their midst: Swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery, and abundant shedding of blood. Such was the continued moral condition of the house of Israel, the ten tribes. It was all the result of having rejected the Word of the Lord and having turned away from Him. The result of unbelief, destructive criticism and denial of the truth is today, as it was then, swearing, lying, stealing, killing and the immoralities of our times. Therefore judgment would overtake all, even the land itself.

2. The Loss of Their Priestly Relation: Verses 6-11. The people were destroyed for lack of knowledge, the knowledge of God and His truth. They had lost their place of nearness to the Lord, their priestly character into which the Lord had called the nation (Exod. xix). Therefore they would be rejected to be no longer in priestly relationship to Jehovah. And the priestly class was as corrupt as the people—"like people like priests." They were to be punished for their ways and their doings.

3. Israel's Idolatry: Verses 12-19. Having left Jehovah they had turned to idols, asked counsel of a piece of wood

and practised divination. This abominable idol worship was practised upon the tops of mountains. There, under trees, they gave themselves over to the vile rites of Baal-peor and Ashtaroth, both men and women abandoned themselves to the grossest sins of the flesh. And the Lord threatens that He would leave them alone in their vileness and not correct them, that they might be brought back. The first chapter of Romans is illustrated by verse 14; they glorified not God, became idolators and then God gave them up to their vile affections.

Then there is a warning to the house of Judah in verse 15. The most sacred places, like Gilgal, had become the scene of the idolatry of the ten tribes. Bethel, the house of God, became a Beth-aven, the house of vanity. If Judah offended and committed the same whoredoms, she would not escape judgment. The warning was unheeded.

"Ephraim (the ten tribes) is joined to idols; let him alone." Ephraim was too far gone; further remonstrances would not help, and so the evil is permitted to go unchecked, to run its full course.

CHAPTER V—VI:3

THE MESSAGE TO THE PRIESTS, THE PEOPLE AND THE ROYAL HOUSE. JUDGMENT, AFFLICTION AND THE FUTURE RETURN

1. The Message of Rebuke. 1-7.
2. The Judgment Announced. 8-15.
3. The Future Return and the Blessing. vi:1-3.

1. The Message of Rebuke: Verses 1-7. The first verse shows who is addressed: the Priests, the house of Israel and the house of the King. Judgment was in store for them, for Mizpah and Tabor, the places of hallowed memory, had been turned by their idolatrous worship into a snare. An old and interesting tradition among the Jews states that at Mizpah the apostates waited for those Israelites who went up to Jerusalem to worship there, to murder them. The next verse seems to indicate something like this tradition.

"And the apostates make slaughter deep; but I am a chastisement to them all"* (see also chapter vi:9). And the Lord saw it all. "I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from Me." He knew the whoredoms of Ephraim and the defilement of Israel. Their evil deeds kept them from returning to their God, for the demon of whoredoms had taken complete possession of them and it kept them in sin and rebellion. Pride was the leading sin of Ephraim, it was to testify against them and both Israel and Ephraim would stumble on account of their guilt and Judah would share the same fate. And though they go with their flocks of sheep and their herds, willing and ready to sacrifice, they shall not be able to find Him, for He hath withdrawn Himself.

2. The Judgment Announced: Verses 8-15. Then follows a vision of judgment. The judgment is seen as having already fallen upon the guilty nation. The horn (Shophar) is blown in Gibeah and the trumpet in Ramah; the alarm is sounded. Gibeah and Ramah were situated on the northern boundary of Benjamin. The enemy was behind Benjamin pursuing. There will be no remedy and no escape (verse 9). "The princes of Judah have become, like the removers of landmarks: I will pour out upon them my wrath like water" (verse 10). A curse is pronounced in the law upon those who remove the landmarks (Deut. xxvii:17). Judah instead of taking warning from the disaster coming upon the northern kingdom, the ten tribes, sought gain by an enlargement of their own border. The princes of Judah, instead of weeping over the calamity, rejoiced at the removal of Israel as the means of removing the boundary line and increase their estate. Wrath was in store for Judah. To Ephraim the Lord would be as a moth. To the house of Judah He would be as rottenness. The moth destroys. Both terms, moth and rottenness, are symbols of destroying influences working against the house of Israel and the house

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*We give the passage we quote in a better and more literal rendering. The authorized version is frequently incorrect.

of Judah (see Isa. l:9, li:8; Psalm xxxix:11; Job xiii:28). Then they turned to the Assyrian for help and to King Jareb. But there was no help. Jareb is not a proper name, it is an epithet applied to the king of Assyria and means "He will contend" or "He will plead the cause." Like a lion would be the Lord to Israel, and like a young lion to Judah. The same symbolical language is used in Isaiah in connection with the Assyrian, the rod of God's anger (Isa. x). "Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions; yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it" (Isa. v:29). Thus judgment came upon them and they were carried away as a prey. And like the lion after his attack withdraws to his den, so the Lord would withdraw from them, leave them and return to His place, waiting till their repentance comes and they seek Him early in their affliction.

The last verse of this chapter has a wider meaning than the past judgment which came upon the house of Israel. The Lord of glory came to earth and visited His people. He came with the message and offer of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He came unto His own, but His own received Him not. After they had rejected Him, delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles to be crucified, He returned to His place. There He is now at the right hand of God, waiting for that day, when the remnant of Israel will repent and seek His face (see Acts iii:19-20). That will be in their coming great affliction, in the time of Jacob's trouble.

3. The Future Return and the Blessing: Chapter vi:1-3. The division of the chapter at this point is unfortunate. The three verses of chapter vi must not be detached from the previous chapter. Here we have the future repentance of the remnant of Israel, that is during the great tribulation. Believingly they will acknowledge His righteous judgment and express their faith and hope in His mercy and the promised blessings and restoration. They express what their great prophet Moses so beautifully stated in His

prophetic song, that great vision given to him, ere he went to the mountain to die. "See now that I, even I, am He and there is no god with Me; I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand" (Deut. xxxii:39). "After two days will He revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight (literally, before His face)." They have been dead spiritually and nationally, but when the two days of their blindness and dispersion are over, there is coming for them the third day of life and resurrection. Jewish expositors have pointed out the fact that a day is with the Lord as a thousand years. They state that they will be in dispersion for two days, that is, two thousand years, after which comes the third day of Israel's glorious restoration. One Rabbinical commentator says: "The first day we were without life in the Babylonian captivity, and the second day, which will also end, is the great captivity in which we are now, and the third day is the great day of our restoration." Like Jonah was given up by the fish on the third day, so comes for Israel a third day of life and glory. Then the latter and the former rain will fall upon their land again, and, blest by Him, their Saviour-King, they will live in His sight. But the passage, no doubt, also points to the resurrection of our Lord, the true Israel in a hidden way.

CHAPTER VI:4-11

DIVINE MOURNING OVER EPHRAIM AND JUDAH

1. What Shall I do to Thee? 4-6.
2. Their Transgression. 7-11.

1. What Shall I do to Thee? Verses 4-6. The Lord grieves and mourns over the condition of the people whom He loves. After the brief glimpse given of their great future of glory we are brought back into the days of Moses. The Lord grieves and mourns over His people whom He loves, who today are still beloved for the Father's sake (Rom. ix). But while He loved them, their love was like the morn-

ing cloud, like the dew, vanishing soon away. The morning cloud looks beautiful, gilded by the rays of the rising sun, but it quickly disappears through the heat of the sun; the dew glitters in the early morning, but soon it is gone. Thus was their love, fluctuating and changing. How often is the love of His heavenly people like the morning cloud and the dew! Thank God that His love never changes! The Prophets He had sent to them came, therefore, with words of condemnation, instead of words of comfort and cheer. They came to hew, as stone or wood is hewn, and the message of judgment they proclaimed condemned them; this is the meaning of the sentence, "I have slain them by the words of my mouth."

2. Their Transgression: Verses 7-11. "Yet they like Adam have transgressed the covenant; they have dealt treacherously against Me." As God had made known His covenant to Adam, given him a commandment, so He had made a covenant with them and made known unto them His will. Like Adam they had transgressed the covenant. Adam had been called into relationship with His Creator and a place of blessing and favor in Eden had been given to him. He transgressed, and after his fall he was driven out. This happened to Israel. Called of God, who entered with them into a covenant and gave them the land of promise, but when they transgressed, like Adam, they were also driven out.* Iniquity and blood was everywhere. Even the priests lurked as a band of robbers and murdered the travelers on the way to Shechem, one of the cities of refuge.†

*Attention has been called to an important distinction. Man is called a sinner. The Gentiles as such are never called transgressors. We read in the New Testament of sinners of the Gentiles, but never "transgressors" of the Gentiles. Adam was under a law, which he broke and by it he became a transgressor. Israel was under the law, which they broke and became transgressors. But no covenant existed with the Gentiles, nor had they the law given to them; hence while they are lost sinners, they are not called transgressors in the sense in which the covenant people are called transgressors.

†Note correct translation: "Upon the way they murder (those who go) to Shechem" (verse 9).

The horrible thing was that Israel was steeped in whoredoms; they were not only spiritually adulterers, but following the idol worship they lived in literal harlotry and lewdness. Judah, too, would get a harvest. But the final sentence of this chapter, "When I return the captivity of My people," is a prophecy, not concerning the return from Babylon, but that other great restoration which is yet to come. Looked upon in this light the entire verse is prophetic. "For thee, also, Judah a harvest waits, when I shall turn the captivity of My people." When God restores His people in His promised covenant mercies then Judah will be visited by judgment as it will be in the end of this age.

CHAPTER VII

THE MORAL DEPRAVITY OF ISRAEL

1. Their Moral Depravity. 1-7.
2. Mingling With Heathen Nations. 8-16.

1. Their Moral Depravity: Verses 1-7. All the gracious efforts of the Lord to heal Israel resulted in a greater manifestation of the iniquity of Ephraim. Instead of turning to Him in true repentance and self-judgment their evil heart turned away from Jehovah, and they continued in their downward course. They did not consider that the Lord would remember all their evil deeds and punish them for it. The king and the princes, the political heads were as corrupt as the priests, they were pleased with the impenitence and wickedness of their subjects. Then follows a graphic description of their moral depravity. They were adulterers, burning with lust, "like an oven heated by the baker, who rests, stirring up (the fire), after he has kneaded the dough until it be leavened." They indulged in all the vile, obscene practices connected with the idol worship of the heathen about them. They were also drunkards and were heated with wine as they were with lust. They made their heart like an oven; their baker (meaning their own evil will and imagination) slept all night, but, awakening

in the morning, their lust is stirred up again. Nor did anyone call upon the name of the Lord.

Such was the moral depravity of a people with whom the Lord had entered into covenant, the favored nation. The source of it was unbelief and the rejection of His Word. The sad history of Israel is repeated in professing Christendom today.

2. Mingling with Heathen Nations: Verses 8-16. The Lord called Israel to be a separated nation, but Ephraim mingled with the heathen (not, people) and is compared to a cake not turned. They adopted heathen ways, heathen manners and heathen vices. Like an unturned cake, which is black and burnt on the one side, while above it is unbaked, such was Ephraim's condition. Such a cake was fit for nothing; it had to be thrown away. The strangers with whom they mingled devoured their strength, nor did they not notice the signs of their speedy national decay. This is the meaning of the statement, "Gray hairs are here and there upon him, and he does not know it." Furthermore, Ephraim is likened to a silly dove without understanding. Instead of flying back to Jehovah their help and rest, they fluttered, like a moth around the flame, around Egypt and Assyria, trying to find deliverance there. But while fluttering from Egypt to Assyria and from Assyria to Egypt, they did not see the net which was spread for their destruction —that net was Assyria itself. In this net the Lord caught them; their freedom would be ended and captivity begin. Then follows the divine Woe. "Woe unto them! for they have wandered from Me. Destruction upon them, that they have transgressed against Me!" The divine lament cried after them, "I would have redeemed them, but they spoke lies against Me." While they may have cried with their mouth, their heart did not. They were like a deceitful bow on which the archer cannot depend, so the Lord could not depend upon Israel. God had, to apply the symbol, bent Israel as His own bow against evil and idolatry, but they turned themselves against Him.

CHAPTER VIII—IX:9

THE APOSTASY IS FOLLOWED BY JUDGMENT

1. The Judgment Announced. 1-7.
2. The Apostasy Which Resulted in Judgment. 8-14.
3. Warning Against Self-Security. Chapter ix:1-9.

1. The Judgment Announced: Verses 1-7. The Prophet is commanded to sound the alarm of the impending judgment. The message is that the enemy will come swift as an eagle upon house of the Lord, which here does not mean the temple (which was in connection with Judah), but Israel as the chosen people was the house, the dwelling-place of the Lord. All their spurious profession, their false claim, "My God, we know Thee, we, Israel," will go for nothing, because they transgressed the covenant and the law. The obnoxious thing they did is stated in verse 4. They had separated themselves from Judah and chosen their own kings and princes in self-will, thus putting themselves outside of the theocracy; idolatry speedily followed. In Bethel they had erected the worship of the calf, the great abomination in the sight of the Lord. He rejects their corrupt worship, and ere long the calf of Samaria will be broken to pieces, like the golden calf their fathers made in the wilderness. They sowed the wind and the whirlwind would be the harvest (see chapter x:13, xii:2; Job iv:8; Prov. xxii:8). They sowed vanity and evil; the tempest of destruction would be their reaping. What they sowed would not yield fruit at all. The Hebrew contains a play of words, "*Tsemach* brings no *Quemach*," which may be rendered, "shoot brings no fruit."

2. The Apostasy which Resulted in Judgment: Verses 8-14. Israel had been swallowed up by the nations, that is, by mingling with them. By their doings they have become like a despised vessel. Their sin was going up to Assyria, like a wild ass, suing there for love and favor. They were like a stubborn brute going there by itself. Ephraim was even worse than the stubborn ass. They formed unnatural alliances with the Gentiles. There they gave presents, hir-

ing lovers, literally rendered, "Ephraim gave presents of love" to practice her whoredoms. They forgot their Creator, God; their sacrifices Jehovah despised. Therefore the judgment.

3. Warning Against Self-Security: Chapter ix:1-9. Under the reign of Jeroboam II Israe. enjoyed great prosperity. It seems they had a bountiful harvest, corn and wine was in abundance. They gave themselves over to feasting and rejoicing. It was at such an occasion when the Lord sent this warning against their own security. Their captivity is announced where they would eat things unclean and feast days will no longer be possible. Then the Prophet beholds them as already in the Assyrian captivity. They went away and turned towards the South to escape the sure destruction. But "Egypt will gather them, Memphis will bury them." Their precious things of silver will give way to thistles and thorns. The day of visitation was at hand; their iniquities are remembered and their sins will be visited.

CHAPTER IX:10-XI:11

RETROSPECT. ISRAEL'S FAILURE AND RUIN

1. Israel Once Beloved Now Fugitive Wanderers. 10-17.
2. Their Guilt and Punishment. Chapter x:1-11.
3. Exhortation and Rebuke. 12-15.
4. The Mercy of a Merciful God. Chapter xi:1-11.

1. Israel Once Beloved, but Wanderers Now: Verses 10-17. Like a wayfaring man who finds grapes and figs in the desert and delights in them, so the Lord found Israel in the desert and they were His pleasure when He led them out of Egypt. But they requited His love by going after Baal-Peor, one of the filthiest gods of heathendom. To this they consecrated themselves and practice their vile abominations. Therefore the glory which He had given to His people will fly away like a bird and their licentious worship of unnatural vices would avenge itself so that there would be no pregnancy and no birth; the promised increase would stop. It seems verses 14-17 are an outburst of the Prophet.

How literally the sentence has been fulfilled. "They will be wanderers."

2. Their Guilt and Punishment: Chapter x:1-11. Here is another retrospect, Israel once called to be a thriving vine (not empty), called to be fruitful; but Israel did not bring forth the expected fruit. As the nation abounded and prospered they increased their idol altars; as the land yielded its increase in the same measure they made their images. Their heart was smooth, or deceitful, for this they will now have to suffer. "Their heart is smooth; now will they make expiation." They will have no more king. The smooth or deceitful heart is described in verse 4, while in the verse which follows the judgment upon their calves they worshipped is announced. It, the calf, will be carried to Assyria to be made a present of to the king. The high places will be destroyed and thorns and thistles will overgrow its altars. Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the hills, "Fall upon us!" Well, it is to read in connection with this prophetic statement what our Lord said about the judgment of Jerusalem in Luke xxiii:30 and what is written in connection with the breaking of the sixth seal in Revelation vi:16.

Gibeah is mentioned (verse 9). The corruption of Gibeah is also noted in chapter ix:9. The horrible abomination of Gibeah is recorded in Judges xix in consequence of which the tribe of Benjamin was almost wiped out. And the people had become as wicked and guilty as Benjamin at Gibeah. The nations are now to be used to punish Israel. "And the nations will gather themselves against them, when I bind them for their offences" (verse 10, literal translation).

3. Exhortation and Rebuke: Verses 12-15. Here is a break in the judgment message. If they would return to the Lord and would sow righteousness, they would reap mercy. But such sowing is impossible unless the fallow ground is broken up, that is, true repentance and a heart return unto the Lord. "For it is time to seek the Lord, until He come and rain righteousness upon you." In what infinite patience He waited for the repentance of His people!

But while He would save them, they would not! Still God's gifts and calling are without repentance and the day will come when a remnant of Israel will seek the Lord; then He will come and rain righteousness upon them.

How different was their condition! The Lord rebukes them, for they had ploughed wickedness, and reaped iniquity. The noise of war is now heard; Shalman (a contracted form of Shalmanezer, the King of Assyria) is advancing and shall destroy all their fortresses as he destroyed Beth-arbel. (There is no further record of Beth-arbel and its destruction.) And who was responsible for all this havoc and the impending calamity? "Thus has Bethel done to you, for the evil of your great evil. In the early morning the king of Israel shall be utterly cut off." Bethel was the seat of Israel's idolatry, it drew God's wrath and finally ended the monarchy in Israel and their national existence.

4. The Mercy of a Merciful God: Chapter xi:1-11. This chapter starts with a beautiful allusion to Israel's youth, when in sovereign love He called Israel, His firstborn Son, out of Egypt, redeeming them by blood and power (Exod. iv:22-23). But this passage is quoted in the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Matt. ii:15). The blending together of Israel and Christ is very interesting. Christ is the true Israel and goes through the entire history of the nation, without failure and in divine perfection. He was carried as an infant into the land where Israel suffered in the fiery furnace; and finally He died for that nation and in some future day through Him, the true Israel (called such in Isa. xlix), Israel's great future and glory will come to pass.

But while the Son of God, the true Israel, was perfect and holy in all His ways, Israel was unfaithful. This record of Jehovah's faithfulness and mercy is here unfolded. He sent them prophets who called them, but they turned away from Him and gave themselves over to the Baalim and the idol-gods. How loving He had been to them! He led them, took them into His arms and healed them. He drew them

with cords of love and was towards them "as those that would raise the yoke-strap over their jaws, and I reached out to them to eat" (verse 4). It is a beautiful picture of His great gentleness with them. Perhaps some of them were anxious to turn to Egypt and find a home there and thus escape the cruel Assyrian. But the Lord declares that they shall not return to Egypt, but Assyria is to be their king, because they refused to return. The sword of judgment would do its work completely (verses 6-7). Then follows a most wonderful outburst of deepest sorrow over the stubborn nation:

"How should I give you up, Ephraim?
How shall I surrender thee, Israel?
How should I make thee Like Admah?
Or set thee like Zeboim?
My heart is turned within me;
My repentings are kindled together."

It is the same Lord who speaks here, who centuries later stood before the city and broke out in loud weeping when He beheld the city: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke xix:42). "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxiii:37). How He loves His people! And though He has punished them, He does not forsake them; He will not be angry forever; He is a covenant keeping God, "For I am God and not man" (verse 9). "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. iii:6). And so here, this chapter of Jehovah's mercy ends with the assurance of their future restoration and blessing. "They will follow the Lord." That will be "when like a lion He

roars." That is the day when He appears again as "The lion of the tribe of Judah." Then, in that day, like a bird from Egypt they will hasten back and like a dove from Assyria. "Then will I make them dwell in their houses, saith the Lord." Here is another prophecy of their restoration to their own, God-given home land.

CHAPTER XI:12-XII

THE INDICTMENT

1. Ephraim's Indictment. Chapter xi:12-xii:2.
2. Remembrance of the Past. 3-6.
3. What Israel Had Become. 7-14.

1. Ephraim's Indictment: Chapter xi:12-xii:2. Lying and deceit had been Ephraim's course towards Jehovah; instead of trusting Him and following Him faithfully they had attached themselves to idols, while Judah still outwardly cleaved to Jehovah, though it was in a rambling way. The word translated "ruleth" means rambling. The better rendering of the sentence is "and Judah is also rambling towards God (or unbridled against Him) and towards the faithful Holy One." But while outwardly Judah seemed to be all right, Ephraim fed on wind, was occupied with the vain, the empty things, increased in lies and desolation and turned to Assyria and Egypt for help, sending as a present olive oil to the latter and making a covenant with the former (see 2 Kings xvii:4). Then the mask is torn from Judah's face. The Lord had a controversey with them also and would repay them according to their evil deeds.

2. Remembrance of the Past: Verses 3-6. Jacob's sons are now reminded of Jacob's experience. Though he was so weak and sinful yet the Lord in marvellous grace met him. The experience at Peniel is recalled. "Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto Him." There he learned the sufficiency of grace and his strength was made perfect in weakness. The angel who appeared unto him that night was none other than the Son of God. What a reminder it was to them. "He found

him (Jacob) in Bethel!" In the very place where the Lord found Jacob and Jacob found the Lord, they had set up their awful, God-defying idol worship. Where God had shown such mercy there they practised now their abominations. Jehovah, the God of hosts, was still the same. He is the Lord who changes not. He was waiting still for their return. To such a God, who keeps His covenant promises they were urged to return and prove their true return by keeping mercy and justice and by waiting on Jehovah continually. But the call of grace and mercy was unheeded.

3. What Israel Had Become: Verses 7-14. The Lord calls apostate Israel a merchant, that is in Hebrew "Canaan" (Canaan means traffic; see Ezek. xvii:4). They had become Canaanites with the balances of deceit, loving to oppress. They had become fraudulent merchants, by cheating and oppression. Their wrong attitude towards Jehovah, having forsaken Him, led to a wrong attitude towards their fellowmen. Instead of repenting they boasted, "I am become rich, I have found me out substance." They were breaking the law continually (see Lev. xix:36 and Deut. xxv:13-16). Yet in all their lawbreaking they prided themselves of being a righteous nation. "In all my labors they shall find no iniquity in me that were sin." How all this fits a good part of the Jews today is too well known to need further comment.

Some day it will be different through the grace and mercy of the never-changing Lord. He is the Jehovah who delivered them out of Egypt; all their blessing and prosperity they owed to Him; He had guided and preserved them, and all their sinning would not diminish His faithfulness to them. They are going to dwell again some day in tents, a reference to the feast of tabernacles, that great feast which typifies the coming millennial blessings for restored Israel. Such had been the continued testimony of the prophets He had sent, who announced the coming judgments and the final blessings in a future day. But now everything was ruin on account of their idolatry. Gilgal was the seat of a part of their idolatry (chapter iv:15, ix:15). Then once more they are reminded of their progenitor Jacob. He fled

before Esau his brother, yet though he was weak he served faithfully for a wife and for a wife he kept guard and Jehovah guarded and blest him. So He would concern Himself with them again. The twenty-sixth chapter of Deuteronomy throws light on this passage. But what was Ephraim's condition? Instead of acknowledging all Jehovah had done for Jacob and his offspring they provoked Him to bitter anger, therefore the Lord would punish them.

CHAPTER XIII

EPHRAIM'S RUIN AND JUDGMENT

1. Ruin and Judgment. 1-8.
2. It is Thy Destruction, O Israel! 9-11.
3. Mercy to Follow Wrath. 12-14.
4. The Desolation of the Nearing Judgment. 15-16.

1. Ruin and Judgment: Verses 1-8. In the beginning Ephraim was humble, and knowing his dependence, he spoke with trembling. Then he became puffed up, exalted himself in Israel, loving the pre-eminence, it led on to the schism from Judah and the house of David. The next step after this separation from Judah was idolatry, then the dying of the nation began. This sad history of Ephraim, revealing the steps of decline, beginning with self-exaltation and ending in ruin and death, has often been repeated in the individual history of countless multitudes among the professing people of God.

Then they went from sinning to sinning, from bad to worse, just as in our own days, the apostates in Christendom go from bad to worse in fulfillment of 2 Timothy iii:13. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Idolatry flourished on all sides. They added idol images in Gilgal and Beersheba to the golden calves (Amos viii:14). Then the judgment is announced, Just as the rising sun quickly disperses the morning clouds and the dew, so they should pass away (see chapter vi:4). They would be like the chaff driven with a whirlwind out of the threshing floor (Psa. i:4, xxxv:5; Isa. xvii:13, xli:15-

16); they would be like the quickly evaporating smoke, which comes out of the windows of a house without a chimney.

Then the Lord reminds them of their former relationship and that He is the true God, "and there is no Saviour beside Me." In the land of the wilderness He knew them and there He cared for them and provided all their needs. But instead of acknowledging Him, they became full; self-exaltation followed, and then they forgot Him. Throughout the Word of God self-exaltation, pride is always given as the starting point of departure from God and the consequent ruin.

Verses 7-8 are interesting. They are to be rent by wild beasts, which, symbolically, represent the Gentiles. The ten tribes were carried away by the Assyrian, while later, when Judah met its judgment, the whole land was devastated by the lion-empire (Babylonia); by the bear (Medo-Persia); by the leopard (the Graeco-Macedonia; and finally by the dreadful beast, "the beast of the field shall tear them," the Roman power.

2. It is Thy Destruction, O Israel: Verses 9-11. "It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against Me, against thy help." What they had done in lifting themselves up, in forsaking Jehovah was spiritual and national suicide. They were alone responsible for their destruction. Where was their King to save them out of such ruin and destruction? The house of David with which the covenant had been made they had forsaken. He reminds them again of an episode in their past history, when they, their fathers, were rebellious and asked for a king. Such kings like Saul had been their kings which reigned over the ten tribes.

3. Mercy to Follow Wrath: Verses 12-14. Ephraim deliberately held on to his sin. Their iniquity was bound up; it was laid by in store. The reference is to the Oriental custom of tying up money and other valuables into a bundle and hiding it somewhere. It was done for security. So the Lord would see to it that their sins and iniquity would not be forgotten; all their sins were preserved for punishment

(see Deut. xxxii:34). Sorrow and great trouble should come upon them. It has been thus in the past, it will be so in the future, in the time of "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. xxx:7). When that time comes, when all their hope and strength is gone (Deut. xxxii:36-43) then He will deliver. Then all the enemies will be put down. Redemption from death and the plagues will come; they will be ransomed from the power of Sheol (not hell). Israel will be raised from its national death—sleep. Long she has been buried among the nations, without spiritual and national life, like those who are in the power of Sheol. But Jehovah will deliver the faithful portion of Israel and Judah, and they will rise from the dust of the earth, the symbol of their national restoration. To use this passage, as it has been done, to teach the restitution of the wicked, is wrong. It has nothing to do with the wicked dead and their future, but all applies to the restoration of Israel (see the annotations of chapters xvi and xxxvii of the Prophet Ezekiel).

3. The Desolation of the Nearing Judgment: Verses 15-16. These verses describe the horrors of the coming judgment by the Assyrians (see 2 Kings viii:12, xv.16, and Amos i:13).

CHAPTER XIV

THE RETURN AND THE GLORIOUS REDEMPTION

1. The Exhortation to Return. 1-3.
2. The Glorious Redemption. 4-9.

1. The Exhortation to Return: Verses 1-3. This chapter is a wonderful finale to the messages of Hosea. What tender entreaties! What gracious assurance! What glorious promises of a future redemption! It is Jehovah beseeching His people, those who had forsaken Him, outraged His character of holiness and who had despised Him. First is the call to return. God's hands are tied as long as His people stay away from Him and do not return to Him in true repentance. No true salvation and deliverance for

His people is possible without a true heart return unto Him. It is this for which He looks and waits.

Then the Lord Himself puts His word and a prayer into their mouth. He loves to provide all. "Take with you words and turn to Jehovah and say unto Him, Forgive all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips." Could their poor, darkened and mistrusting hearts ever even have imagined to ask thus of Him? Their consciences were defiled; the burden of guilt was upon them. But Jehovah does not mention their sins and their guilt, but tells them just to pray for forgiveness and for a gracious reception. And He who tells His wayward people to pray, to turn to Him, to pray for forgiveness, He who assures them that He hears, assures them of a gracious receiving, will never fail. How full of comfort these few sentences are to all His people at all times! We can imagine that in Hosea's day there were individual Israelites who took these words to heart. After them generations of Jews read them and turned individually to the Lord, found forgiveness and became the objects of His grace. And we too, as His people, when we have gone back in our spiritual life, can find our comfort here, and appropriate all this in faith as we act upon His Word. In the future the remnant of Israel will take these gracious exhortations to heart, and before the glorious redemption is given to them return to the Lord with this prayer.

"So will we render the calves of our lips." Literally rendered it is "we will pay as young oxen our lips," i.e., present the prayers of our lips as a thankoffering; we will be worshippers. Such is the result of a real return unto the Lord with sins forgiven and restored to His fellowship. The days of singing are coming for Israel in that day when they return unto Him and He appears in His Glory to be enthroned as King. It will usher in the singing times for all the world, including groaning creation, then delivered. Then follows the evidence of their genuine repentance. It is expressed in words suited to the condition of Ephraim in Hosea's day. They repudiate Assyria; they acknowledge that no salva-

tion is there, but only in Jehovah. No longer will they trust in their own strength and in the strength of their horses; no longer will they turn to idols and call them "Our God," but they will acknowledge Him in whom the fatherless findeth mercy. Israel, God's Firstborn son, had been the prodigal, was fatherless, though the Father's love never gave them up. But now the prodigal returns and knows there is One in whom the fatherless findeth abundant mercy. All this true repentance will be manifested at the close of this age, when the remnant of Israel turns to the Lord.

2. The Glorious Redemption: Verses 5-9. His gracious answer to such repentance follows. Three times Jehovah speaks "I will." This is the word of Sovereign grace (see Annotations on Ezekiel, page 315). The three "I wills" are: (1) I will heal their backslidings; (2) I will love them freely; (3) I will be a dew unto Israel. They are arranged in a most blessed order. Mercy, love and gracious refreshment resulting in fruitfulness and beauty, such is the order. The past is wiped out, the present is love and the future is glory. Like the lily, like Lebanon and like the olive-tree, Israel is to be. The lily denotes beauty; they will be clad in the beauty of holiness. Lebanon stands for strength and stability; they will become the nation of power which can never be moved. Then they shall be once more the olive-tree; the broken off branches will be put back (Rom. xi:16, etc.). The blessings of the restored Israel in the millennium are given in the seventh verse.

Beautiful is verse 8. "Ephraim (shall say), "What have I to do any more with idols? I hear and I look upon Him; I am like a green fir tree. From Me is thy fruit found." Ephraim, the cake half turned, Ephraim, of whom it was said, he is joined to idols, leave him alone, now repudiates the idols. And why? I hear and I look upon Him! The vision of the Lord turned the stubborn heart. It is so still; the great power is to hear Him, to look upon Him. In that day Israel will look on Him whom they pierced, the great turning point in their future history. Then the nation will yield the fruit through their fellowship with Him. Blessed

ending of this prophecy. "For the ways of Jehovah are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein."

JOEL

The Prophet Joel

INTRODUCTION

Joel means "Jehovah is God." This name occurs frequently in the Old Testament (1 Sam. viii:2; 1 Chronicles iv:35, v:4, 8, 12, etc.). The Prophet Joel was the son of Pethuel. Numerous guesses have been made about his personality. A tradition states that he was from Bethom in the tribe of Reuben. In 1 Chronicles xxiv:16 a man by name of Pethaliah is mentioned. Some have connected him with the father of Joel, Pethuel, claiming upon this that Joel belonged to a priestly family; but this, as well as other claims cannot be confirmed. Jewish expositors make the statement that Pethuel was Samuel, because Samuel had a son by name of Joel; but, inasmuch as the sons of Samuel were evildoers this is incorrect. The book itself does not give even a single hint as to his personal history.

WHEN AND WHERE JOEL LIVED

As to the time and place, when and where he exercised his prophetic office, we are not left in doubt. He prophesied not like Hosea among the ten tribes, but he was a prophet of Judah. The entire prophecy bears witness to it; this fact has never been disputed. It is different with the date of Joel. Destructive criticism has assigned to Joel a post-exilic date, with some very puerile arguments. For instance they claim that the mention of the walls of Jerusalem (chapter ii:7, 9), point to a date after Ezra and Nehemiah. Such an argument is not an argument of a scholar, but of a schoolboy. Critics also object to an early date because the Greeks are mentioned in chapter iii:6. But the Greeks are also mentioned in an inscription of Sargon (about 710 B. C.), and long before that in the Armana letters a Greek is also mentioned, as stated in "Higher Criticism and the Monuments" by Professor Sayce.

The best Jewish and Christian scholarship has maintained a very early date of Joel. When the editor published his larger work on Joel, in which he puts the date between 860 and 850 B. C., Professor H. A. Sayce of Oxford, one of the greatest scholars of our times, wrote in a personal letter to the writer: "Let me thank you heartily for your very interesting exposition of Joel. I am glad to see a work of the kind on conservative lines; the attempts to find a late date for the prophet rests on arguments which to the inductive scientist are no arguments at all." This strong statement and endorsement of a very early date for Joel certainly outweighs the arguments of certain critics who possess nothing like the scholarship of the Oxford professor.

There is nothing mentioned in Joel of the Assyrian period 800-650, nor is there anything said of the Babylonian period 650-538, hence Joel must have prophesied before the Assyrian period, that is in the ninth century B. C., or he must have lived after the exile. The latter is excluded, therefore Joel exercised his office as prophet in Judah during the middle of the ninth century, as stated above, about 860-850 B. C. This view is abundantly verified by different facts found in the book itself.

Now, the date of Amos is generally accepted as being in the middle of the 8th century before Christ. In the first chapter of the Book of Amos there is an undoubted quotation from the Book of Joel. (See Joel iii:16 and Amos i:2). Dr. Pusey makes the following argument out of this fact:

"Amos quoting Joel attests two things. (1) That Joel's prophecy must, at the time when Amos wrote, have become a part of Holy Scriptures, and its authority must have been acknowledged; (2) That its authority must have been acknowledged by, and it must have been in circulation among, those to whom Amos prophesied; otherwise he would not have prefixed to his book those words of Joel. For the whole force of the words, as employed by Amos, depends on being recognized by his hearers, as a renewal of the prophecy of Joel. Certainly bad men jeered at Amos, as though this threatening would not be fulfilled."

The seven strongest reasons for the early date of Joel are the following:

1. Joel charges the Philistines with having invaded Judah, captured the inhabitants, and sold them as slaves. Now, according to 2 Chron. xxi:16, this happened under Joram, B. C. 889-883. And they suffered the punishment predicted for their crime, under Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi:6. Hence Joel could not have written this book before B. C. 889, nor later than 732.

2. The Phoenicians, i. e., those of Tyre and Sidon, who in the days of David and Solomon were the allies, had in later times become the enemies of Judah. They too had been guilty of selling Jewish prisoners to the Grecians. Joel predicts that they also shall be punished for this crime—a prediction fulfilled in the time of Uzziah, B. C. 811-759. This proves that Joel must have prophesied before the days of Uzziah.

3. The Edomites (iii:19), are ranked among the enemies of Judah. They came from the same stock as the Jews, and on account of their sin against their brethren, their country was to become a perpetual desolation. From 2 Kings viii:20, comp. with 2 Chron. xxi:8, we learn that they became independent of Judah in the time of Joram, B. C. 889-883. They were again subdued, and their capital city Petra captured, B. C. 838-811, though the southern and eastern parts of their territory were not conquered until the reign of Uzziah, about B. C. 830.

The prophet must have exercised his ministry, therefore, prior to the latter date.

4. The fact that no mention is made of the invasion by the Syrians of Damascus proves that Joel was one of the early prophets. This occurred in the latter part of the reign of Josiah, B. C. 850-840.

5. The high antiquity of Joel is proved by the fact that he makes no reference to the Assyrian invasion of the two Jewish kingdoms in B. C. 790. On the other hand, Amos clearly alludes to it (vi:14).

6. Another proof is derived from the relation between Joel and Amos. The latter was certainly well acquainted with the writings of the former.

7. The mention of the Valley of Jeoshaphat is a circumstance leading to the same conclusion. It took this name from the memorable victory there gained over Moab and Ammon. The way in which Joel refers to it shows that this event must have been a comparatively recent one, and that the memory of it was still fresh.

On these grounds we conclude that in fixing the time of this prophet, we cannot take for our *terminus a quo* an earlier date than B. C. 890, nor for our *terminus ad quem* a later one than 840. It most probably falls between B. C. 860-850. Joel therefore is probably the oldest of the Minor Prophets.

THE PROPHECY OF JOEL

The prophecy of Joel is one which extends from his own time to the time of Israel's restoration and blessing in the day of the Lord. The style of the brief prophecy is sublime. To show its beauty we give a corrected metric version. It must be read through several times to grasp its vivid descriptions, the terse and solemn utterances, the full, smooth phrases, and above all the revelation it contains. His utterances are distinguished by the soaring flight of imagination, the originality, beauty and variety of the similes. The conceptions are simple enough, but they are at the same time bold and grand. The perfect order in which they are arranged, the even flow, the well compacted structure of the prophecy are all remarkable.

He may well be called "The Prophet of the Lord's Day." Five times he mentions this day. Chapters i:15, ii:1-12, 10-11, 30-31, and iii:14-16. The great theme then is "The Day of the Lord," that coming day, when the Lord is manifested, when the enemies of Israel are judged, when the Lord restores and redeems Israel.

The occasion of the book and prophecy of Joel was a dreadful scourge which swept over the land of Israel. Locusts swarms had fallen upon the land and stripped it of everything green. There was also a great drought. All was a chastisement from the Lord. Hence we see in the first chapter the penitential lamentations of old and young, priests and people. Then the vision widens in the second chapter. The locusts

appear no longer as a scourge of literal insects; they become typical of an invading army. This hostile army invades the land from the North and makes the land a wilderness. The alarm is sounded in Zion; the repentance of the people follows. Then comes the great change in this picture of desolation and despair. The day of the Lord is announced. He acts in behalf of His people. He delivers them from the Northern Army; He restores what the locusts had devoured; the land is restored and the latter rain is given. At the close of the second chapter stands the prophecy which predicts spiritual blessings through the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh, a prophecy which has not yet been completely fulfilled, which is not now in process of fulfillment, but which will be accomplished in the day of the Lord. The last chapter is the great finale of this symphony of Prophecy. Here the judgment of the nations is vividly portrayed; what the day of the Lord will bring, and what will follow in blessing is the final theme.

But few Christians have ever given much heed to this prophetic book. There are many important truths in this book. A great deal of confusion might have been avoided if more attention had been given to the setting in which the prediction of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh is found. The Pentecostal delusion is built up mostly upon the wrong interpretations of this prophecy.

THE DIVISIONS OF JOEL

The divisions of the prophecy of Joel, as found in our English version, cannot be improved upon. We follow it in our analysis and annotations.

The Book of Joel

A METRIC VERSION

CHAPTER I.

1. The Word of Jehovah which came to Joel, the Son of Pethuel.
2. Hear this, ye aged men
   And open the ear ye inhabitants of the land!
   Hath this happened in your days,
   Or even in the days of your fathers?
3. Relate it to your children
   And your children to their children,
   And their children to another generation.
4. What the *Gazam** left, the *Arbeh* hath devoured
   And what the *Arbeh* left, the *Jelek* hath devoured
   And what the *Jelek* left, the *Chasel* hath devoured.
5. Awake, ye drunkards and weep!
   And howl all ye drinkers of wine
   Because of the sweet wine,
   For it is taken away from your mouth.
6. For a nation has come up upon my land
   Mighty and without number—
   His teeth—lion's teeth—
   The jaw teeth, that of a lioness.
7. He hath made my vine for a desolation
   And my figtree broken off;
   Peeled off completely and cast it away;
   Its branches are made white.
8. Lament like a virgin!
   Girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.
9. Cut off is the meat and drink offering from the house of Jehovah.
   The priests mourn, the servants of Jehovah.
10. "Wasted is the field
    Mourning is the land—
    For wasted is the corn
    The new wine is dried up
    The oil faileth."

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*We left these four words untranslated for reasons which will be given in the exposition.

11. Be ashamed, husbandmen!
Howl—vine dressers!
For the wheat and the barley.
Because the harvest of the field is lost.
12. The vine is dried up
And the figtree faileth
The pomegranate, also the palm and the apple tree.
All the trees of the field are withered.
Gone is joy from the children of men.
13. Gird yourselves and lament, O ye priests,
Howl, ministers of the altar;
Come lie down in sackcloth all night
Ye ministers of my God.
For withholden from the house of your God
Are the meat offering and the drink offering.
14. Sanctify a fast.
Call a solemn gathering.
Bring together the Elders
All the inhabitants of the land
In the house of Jehovah your God
And cry unto Jehovah
15. Woe! For the Day!
Because near is the day of Jehovah
Even like destruction from Shaddai* it comes.
16. Is not the food cut off before our eyes?
From the house of our God joy and gladness.
17. The seeds have perished under their clods.
The garners become desolate
The storehouses are broken down
For withered is the corn.
18. Hear the cattle groan!
The herds of cattle are bewildered,
For there is no feeding place for them.
Also the flocks of sheep are made to suffer.†
19. To Thee, Jehovah, I cry,
For the fire has consumed the goodly places of the desert
And a flame hath burned all the trees of the field.
20. Also the cattle of the field look up‡ unto Thee

*The only time Shaddai (Almighty) is used in Joel. In the Hebrew there is a resemblance of sound between "destruction" and "Shaddai."

†The Hebrew word, which we translate "made to suffer" means in its root "to be guilty." The form of the verb used here would best be translated by the German "bussen."

‡Another word different from the 19th verse is used, though nearly all translators use "cry." It is more a groaning, desirous looking up.

For the streams of water are dried up,
And a fire hath consumed the goodly places of the desert.

CHAPTER II.

1. Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Sound an alarm in the mount of my holiness.
Let all the dwellers of the land tremble,
For the day of Jehovah cometh,
For it is near at hand.
2. A day of darkness and gloom
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the dawn spread upon the mountains;—
A people numerous and strong!
Never hath there been the like before,
Neither shall the like come again,
In the years of many generations.
3. A fire devoureth before them,
And behind them a flame burneth;
Before them the land is as the garden of Eden,
And behind them a desolate wilderness,
Yea, and nothing can escape them.
4. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses,
And like the horsemen shall they run.
5. Like the noise of chariots,
On the mountain tops, they shall leap,
Like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble,
Like a strong people set in battle array.
6. Before them the peoples are in distress
All faces turn to paleness.
7. They run like mighty men
They climb the wall like men of war;
And they march each one in his ways,
And they turn not aside from their ranks.
8. Nor doth one press upon another.
A mighty one* marches in the high road.
They fall upon the dart, but are not wounded.
9. They spread themselves in the city,
They run along upon the wall,
They climb up into the houses,
They enter in by the windows like a thief.
10. The earth trembleth before them,
The heavens shake,

*This is the literal meaning.

The sun and the moon are darkened,
And the stars withdraw their shining.
11. And Jehovah uttereth His voice before his army
For very great is His host,
For He that executeth His Word is mighty;
For great is the day of Jehovah and very terrible,
And who can stand it?
12. Yet even now, saith Jehovah,
Return unto me with all your heart,
With fasting and with weeping and with mourning.
13. And rend your heart and not your garments,
And return unto Jehovah your God,
For He is gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger and of great loving kindness
And repenteth Him of the evil.
14. Who knoweth He may return and repent
And leave a blessing behind,
An oblation and a drink offering
For Jehovah your God.
15. Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Sanctify a fast.
16. Call out a solemn assembly,
Gather the people.
Sanctify a congregation.
Assemble the old men.
Gather the children,
And those that suck the breasts;
Let the bridegroom leave his chamber
And the bride her closet;
17. Let the priests, the ministers of Jehovah,
Weep between the porch and the altar,
And let them say:—
"Spare Thy people, O Jehovah,
And give not thine heritage to reproach
That the nations should rule over them*.
Wherefore should they say among the peoples
Where is their God?"
18. Then Jehovah will be jealous for His land,
And will have pity on His people.
19. And Jehovah will answer and say to His people:
Behold I am sending to you the corn,
The new wine and the oil;
And ye shall be satisfied therewith,

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*Or, "they that should be a byword of the nations."

And I will no longer make you
For a reproach among the nations.
20. And I will remove afar from you the One from the North
And will drive him into a dry and desolate land,
His face toward the Eastern sea
His rear toward the Western sea
And his stench shall arise
And his ill odour shall ascend,
For he hath lifted himself up to do great things.
21. Fear not, O Land
Be glad and rejoice,
For Jehovah doeth great things.
22. Fear not, ye beasts of the field!
For the pastures of the desert spring forth,
The tree beareth her fruit
The fig tree and the vine give their strength.
23. Ye children of Zion, be glad and rejoice
In Jehovah your God;
For He giveth you the early rain in righteousness,
He causeth to descend for you the showers,
The early and the latter rain as before.
24. And the floors shall be full of corn,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.
25. And I will restore to you the years,
Which the *Arbeth* hath eaten.
The *Jekel*, the *Chasel* and the *Gazam*,
My great army, which I sent among you.
26. Then ye shall be in abundance, and be satisfied
And praise the name of Jehovah your God,
Who has dealt wondrously with you,
And my people shall never be ashamed.
27. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
And that I Jehovah am your God, and none else.
And my people shall never be ashamed.
28. And it shall come to pass afterwards,
I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy;
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
29. Yea, even upon the men servants and the maid servants,
In those days will I pour out my Spirit.
30. And I will give wonders in the heaven and on earth,
Blood, and fire and pillars of smoke.
31. The sun shall be turned to darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come.

32. And it shall come to pass
Whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be saved.
For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance,
As Jehovah hath said,
Even for the remnant whom Jehovah shall call.

CHAPTER III.

1. For behold in those days and in that time,
When I shall bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem;
2. I will also bring together all nations,
And will bring down into the valley of Jehoshaphat;
And there will I judge them on account of my people,
And my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations,
And they divided my land.
3. And they cast lots for my people,
They gave a boy for a harlot,
And sold a girl for wine, and drank it.
4. Yea also, what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Sidon,
And all the borders of Philistia?
Would you requite me with retaliation?
If your retaliate
Swiftly and speedily will I bring your recompense
Upon your own head.
5. Because ye have taken my silver and gold,
And have brought into your temples my very best things
6. And the children of Judah and of Jerusalem,
Ye sold to the children of the Greeks,
That ye might remove them far from their border.
7. Behold I will raise them up out of the place whither ye sold them,
And I will return the retaliation upon your own head.
8. And I will sell your sons and your daughters
Into the hands of the sons of Judah.
And they shall sell them to the Sabeans to a far off nation.
For Jehovah hath spoken it.
9. Proclaim this among the nations:
Declare a war!
Arouse the mighty ones!
Let all the men of war draw near, let them come up!
10. Beat your ploughshares into swords,
And your pruning hooks into spears.
Let the weak say, I am strong.

11. Come together,
All ye nations round about
Gather yourselves together.
Thither cause thy mighty ones to come down,
O, Jehovah!
12. Let the nations arise and come up
To the valley of Jehoshaphat,
For there will I sit to judge all the nations round about.
13. Put in the sickle,
For the harvest is ripe;
Come—Tread!
For the wine-press is full,
The vats overflow;
For their wickedness is great.
14. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of Jehovah is at hand in the valley of decision.
15. The sun and the moon are darkened
And the stars withdraw their shining.
16. And Jehovah shall roar from Zion,
And send forth His voice from Jerusalem;
And the heavens and the earth shall shake;
But Jehovah will be a refuge for His people
And a fortress for the sons of Israel.
17. And ye shall know that I, Jehovah, your God,
Dwell in Zion, my holy mountain;
And Jerusalem shall be holy,
And strangers shall no more pass through her.
18. And it shall come to pass in that day
That the mountains shall drop down new wine,
And the hills shall flow with milk,
And all the river beds of Judah shall be full with waters,
And a fountain shall come forth from the house of Jehovah,
And shall water the valley of Shittim.
19. Egypt shall be a desolation
And Edom shall be a desolate wilderness.
For their violence against the children of Judah,
Because they shed innocent blood in their land.
20. But Judah shall abide forever.
And Jerusalem from generation to generation.
21. And I will purge them from the blood
From which I had not purged them.
And Jehovah will dwell in Zion.

Analysis and Annotations

Chapter i.

I. THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS.

II. THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD; THE RUIN, THE REPENTANCE AND THE RESTORATION.

Chapter ii.

III. THE EVENTS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD; ISRAEL'S ENEMIES JUDGED; THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED.

Chapter iii.

I. THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

CHAPTER I

1. The Prophet's Appeal. 1-4.
2. The Call to the Drunkards. 5-7.
3. The Call to the People and the Priests. 8-14.
4. The Day of the Lord; the Suffering Land. 15-18.
5. The Prayer of the Prophet. 19-20.

1. The Prophet's Appeal: Verses 1-4. The Prophet announces that it is the Word of Jehovah he utters, which came to him. Verses 2 and 3 are an introduction to the description which follows the great calamity which had befallen the land. It is in the form of an appeal. What had happened to the land is of such a fearful character that it is unprecedented. The visitation of the land by the locust plague is to be related to future generations, because there is a great prophetic meaning as to the future attached to the locusts, which will be pointed out later. The fourth verse we render in a way our own, leaving the words of the destroying insects untranslated.

> What the *Gazam* left, the *Arbeh* hath devoured;
> And what the *Arbeh* left, the *Jelek* hath devoured;
> And what the *Jelek* left, the *Chasel* hath devoured.

We left the Hebrew words untranslated because they do not express insects of different species; they are one insect, the locust, in a fourfold stage. Gazam means "to gnaw off;" Arbeh is "to be many"; this is the common name of the locusts on account of their migratory habits. Jelek is "to lick off," and Chasel means "to devour or consume." The locust passes through a fourfold stage in its development to full growth. First, it is the gnawing locust, when first hatched; then it gets its wings and flies about; after that it starts in its destructive work by licking off whatever it finds, and, finally, it reaches its full growth and devours everything in its path. For a full description of the locusts, their habits, their awful work of destruction in Oriental countries see our commentary on Joel, pages 33-39 and in Appendix B.*

The locust plague which laid Israel's land bare was a judgment from the Lord. It was one of the judgments the Lord sent upon Egypt, and Moses had prophetically announced that the Lord would use them to punish his people (see Deut. xxviii:38, 42).

But these literal locusts, which fell literally upon the land and destroyed in a short time all vegetation, are symbolic of other agencies which were to be used later in Israel's history to bring judgment upon the land and the people. They are typical of Gentile armies, as stated in the second chapter, where the Lord calls them "My great army." Here is unquestionably a prophetic forecast as to the future of the land. From Daniel's prophecy we learn twice that four world-powers should subjugate Israel and prey upon the land: Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Graeco-Macedonia and Rome. Zechariah, also, in one of his night visions, beheld four horns, and these four horns scattered Judah and Jerusalem. We see, therefore, in the locusts, first, the literal locusts which destroyed everything in vegetation at the time Joel

*Many foolish applications have been made of these locusts. One of the most ridiculous is the one made by a certain woman-healer in her book "Lost and Restored."

lived, and these locusts are symbolical of future judgments executed upon the land and the nations by the prophetically announced world-powers. At the close of the "times of the Gentiles," during which Jerusalem is trodden down, the final invasion of the land takes place; it is this which is described in the second chapter.

2. The Call to the Drunkards: Verses 5-7. The first swarm had probably appeared in the fall; only the vineyards had not yet been harvested. They attacked the vineyards and speedily the vines and the grapes disappeared under the onslaught. The drinkers of wine were therefore to suffer first. That there was much drunkenness among the people Israel, especially in the days of their prosperity, may be learned from Amos vi:1-6; Isa. v:11, xxiv:7-9, xxviii:7, etc. In verse 6 the locusts are described as a nation, mighty without number, with lion's teeth. This confirms the typical application to Gentile nations of the future who would devastate the land. See, furthermore, Numbers xiii:33, Isaiah xl:22 and Jeremiah li:14, where the same comparison is made.

3. The Call to the People and to the Priests: Verses 8-14. On account of the great disaster the people are called to mourn and put on sackcloth. "Lament like a virgin, girded with sackcloth, for the husband of her youth." This is a significant expression. Israel in her relationship to Jehovah is here indicated. We are reminded of Isaiah iii:26 concerning Jerusalem, "And her gates shall lament and mourn, and she, being desolate, shall sit on the ground;" and Isaiah liv:6, "For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God." So great was the havoc wrought that the meal and drink offering was cut off from the house of the Lord so that the priests mourned, the servants of Jehovah. This is their mournful chant:

Wasted is the field,
Mourning is the land,
For wasted is the corn,
The new vine is dried up,
The oil faileth.

This is followed by the call to lament for the husbandmen and vinedressers. The whole harvest was gone, and besides the failure of the vine, the fig tree the other trees are also mentioned, yea, "all the trees of the field are withered." On account of the severity of this visitation joy had left the children of men.

Then comes the definite call to the priests to lament and cry unto Jehovah and to sanctify a fast (verses 13-14). But there is no record of a response. At the close of this chapter the Prophet alone raises his voice to Jehovah. We shall learn in the second chapter of the time of the national repentance of Israel.

4. The Day of the Lord. The Suffering Land: Verses 15-18. For the first time we meet the day of the Lord (Yom Jehovah), that phrase used so frequently in all the prophetic books. The 15th verse is an exclamation of the Prophet as before his vision that day appears. In the midst of the weird description of the calamity, present in Joel's day, he beholds a greater judgment approaching. It is the same day he beholds which the other prophets mention; each time Joel uses this expression it means the coming day of the Lord, still approaching. It may be noticed that the five passages in Joel in which "the day of the Lord" is mentioned are progressive.

For a comparative study of this important phrase we quote the leading passage of the different prophets.

Isaiah. The phrase "in that day" is found many times in his book. We mention ii:2–5, 10-22; iv; xiii:6–13. The great glory predictions of Isaiah liv, lx, lxi and lxii are all related to this day.

Jeremiah. He also speaks of that day (chapters. xxv:30–33; xxx:18–24).

Ezekiel. Chapters vii and viii. From chapters xxxvii-xlviii we have the record of great events both of judgment and blessing which will come to pass in connection with that day. While *Daniel* does not use in his book the phrase "day of the Lord" nearly all his great prophecies are connected with that day. It is the day in which the stone

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smites the great image, representing the times of the Gentiles, and demolishes it; the day on which "the Son of Man" comes in the clouds of heaven to receive the kingdom. *Hosea* points to that day in chapters ii and iii, as well as in the closing chapter.. *Amos* witnesses to it in chapters i:2, vi:3, ix:2, 15. *Obadiah*, who lived about the same time as Joel, speaks of the day in verse 15 of his brief prophecy. *Micah* in his prophecy refers to it in chapter v:15. In *Nahum* the day is described in which the Lord will deal in judgment with the wicked world cities (see chapter i:1–9). The third chapter of *Habakkuk* reveals that day. *Zephaniah* has a great deal more to say about that day than the preceding prophetic books (see chapters i:14–18; ii and iii). *Haggai* bears witness to it in chapter ii:6–7. (Compare with Heb. xii:26–29). *Zechariah* uses the phrase "in that day" many times, especially in the last three chapters. *Malachi* reveals the day in chapters iii:1–3 and iv:1–3).

We learn from all this what a prominent place the day of the Lord occupies in the prophecies. It must be so, for it is the day of manifestation and consummation. Joel beheld here for the first time this day.

Then follows an additional description of the great calamity which had come upon the land in Joel's day (verses 16–18).

5. The Prayer of the Prophet: Verses 19-20. Joel was, like all the other prophets, a man of prayer. No other mention is made by the Prophet concerning himself, but this brief word is sufficient to give us a glimpse of his inner life and his trust in the Lord. He cried to Jehovah in the great distress.

II. THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD. THE REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

CHAPTER II

1. The Alarm Sounded; the Day at Hand. 1-2.
2. The Invading Army from the North. 3-11.
3. The Repentance of the People and Cry for Help. 12-17.

4. "Then." The Great Change. 18.
5. Promises of Restoration. The Early and Latter Rain. 19-27.
6. The Outpouring of the Spirit upon all Flesh. 28-31.
7. Deliverance in Mount Zion and Jerusalem. 32.

1. The Alarm Sounded; the Day at Hand: Verses 1-2. With this chapter we reach the heart of the prophecy of Joel. The description of the literal locust plague is now no longer continued. As we have shown the literal locusts in their different stages were symbolical of nations laying waste the land as the locusts had done. Dispensationally the first chapter stands for the entire times of the Gentiles, which began with Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. ii:36-38), and they continue till the time comes when the God of heaven sets up a kingdom that cannot be destroyed. The second chapter takes us at once to the end of the times of the Gentiles, when the day of the Lord is to be enacted. Before the Lord appears in that day, the greatest distress will be upon the land and the people; there will be a great time of trouble such as never was before (Matt. xxiv:21). The remnant of His people will cry to the Lord for intervention and for deliverance, and the Lord will answer their cry and deliver them. Then their land becomes once more like the garden of Eden, there will be a great outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh and from Jerusalem the great kingdom-center blessings will extend to all the nations.

This whole chapter as well as the next one is therefore unfulfilled. Nothing of it has been fulfilled. Before it can be fulfilled a part of the people Israel must be restored to the land of promise and the ancient ceremonies and institutions be at least partially restored.

The chapter begins with the sounding of the alarm for "the Day of Jehovah cometh, for it is near at hand." The last prophetic week of Daniel is now in process of fulfillment and near its end (see annotations on Dan. ix). A part of the people are back in the land, having returned there in unbelief, just as we see it today in the Zionistic movement. But in their midst will also be found a God-fearing remnant.

The blowing of the trumpet shows that they have revived their ancient custom (see Num. x:1, 2, 9). We also mention that trumpets are often connected with the appearing of the Lord and the restoration of Israel. In the second verse the day is described and may be compared with Zephaniah i:15–16 and Isaiah lx:2. Then there is an invading army announced which is fully described in the verses which follow. The words, "As the dawn spread upon the mountains," are a description of the day and not of the army, as some have taken it. On the one hand the day of the Lord is a day of darkness and gloom, on the other hand it is "like the dawn spread upon mountains." After the darkness, the morning light will break "the morning without clouds" (2 Sam. xxiii:4).

2. The Invading Army from the North: Verses 3-11. Many armies in past history have occupied the land of Israel and wasted it, but here is the coming great invasion from the North. This invasion is mentioned in the Prophet Isaiah also. The Assyrian who came in Isaiah's day to take Jerusalem is the type of the final Assyrian who threatens the land and the people with destruction. He is also prefigured by Antiochus Epiphanes, who came into the land of Israel as the predicted little horn, rising from one of the divisions of the Graeco-Macedonian Empire (Dan. viii*).

This army of Israel's enemies finds the land like the garden of Eden; it has been restored through political Zionism, irrigated and cultivated. The Jews are at it now, determined to make Palestine the garden-spot of the world, their Eden, as it has been said. Then comes the rude awakening. They thought themselves safe; they dreamed that their plans they had made without trusting in the Lord and without true repentance, had fully succeeded. But now the greatest trouble of their long history of blood and tears is at hand. The land is once more stripped of its beauty.

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*We refer the reader to our larger works on Daniel, Joel and the Harmony of the Prophetic Word. In the exposition of Joel a full explanation of this invading army is given on pages 91-104.

Before them the land is as the garden of Eden,
And behind them a desolate wilderness,
Yea, and nothing can escape them.

The Lord uses these destructive hosts to humble His people, to show them that He is their help, when this great calamity is upon them. The symbolical language here is characteristic of other prophecies.

The earth trembleth before them;
The heavens shake,
The sun and the moon are darkened,
And the stars withdraw their shining
* * * * * * * * * * *
For the Day of the Lord is great and very terrible.

Compare this with the following passages: Isa. xiii:13; Hab. i:6, 12; Zech. xiv:3, 4).

3. The Repentance of the People and Cry for Help: Verses 12-17. Here is the Lord calling to His people to return unto Him with true repentance (compare with Hosea v:15-vi:1). And during that great tribulation there will be a truly penitent portion of the people who turn to Him in the manner described in this chapter. It is this remnant which will be saved in that day, while the impenitent part will be cut off in judgment. Ezekiel xx:38 and Zech. xiii:8-9 speak of this. What Moses spoke long ago now takes place (Deut. xxx:1-4). The many prophetic prayers recorded in the Psalms, as pointed out in the annotations of that book, will then be offered up by this godly waiting remnant (Psa. xliv:13-14, cxv:2-3, lxxix:9-10, etc.). This mourning and prayer for deliverance precedes the visible manifestation of the Lord in the day of His Coming. When at last deliverance has come there will be another lamentation. This is found in Zech. xii:9-14 and in Rev. i:7.

4. "Then!" The Great Change: Verses 18. "Then Jehovah will be jealous for His land and will have pity on His people." Here is the great change. Up to this point we have seen nothing but calamity and judgments. Literal locusts had devoured the land—the types of nations which

would prey upon the land. They came, and Jerusalem was trodden down by the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles terminated in Jacob's trouble, out of which they are to be saved (Jer. xxx:7). We saw their great repentance. Here is the answer from above. When their power is completely gone (Deut. xxxii:36), *then* will the Lord be jealous for His land and pity His people. Often this little word "then" is found in the prophetic Word marking the great change, from Israel's past judgments and rejection to deliverance and glory. The following passages should be carefully examined and compared with the 18th verse here: Isa. xiv:25, xxiv:23, xxxii:16, xxxv:5-6, lviii:8, 14, lx:5, lxvi:12; Ezek. xxviii:25-26, etc.

The Lord's personal manifestation is not mentioned here. The deliverance does not come apart from the second Coming of our Lord. The entire prophetic Word bears witness to this. "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem" (Zech. xiv:3-4). "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in glory" (Psa. cii:16). "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, He shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; He shall cry, yea, roar; He shall prevail against His enemies" (Isa. xlii:13).

5. Promises of Restoration. The Early and Latter Rain: Verses 19-27. Here is His gracious answer. He will bless their land and make it fruitful once more, as it used to be, the land flowing with milk and honey. It is foolish to spiritualize the terms corn, new wine and oil. Yet it has been done. One of the older commentators of this book says on this verse about the corn, wine and oil, that it has been fulfilled in the church. The corn he applies to the body of Christ, the wine to the blood of Christ, and the oil to the Spirit. Earthly blessings, such as belong to His earthly people are exclusively in view. Then they shall be no longer a reproach among the nations. Inasmuch as they are still a reproach we know that this promise is still future in its fulfillment. The One from the North will be overthrown

and pass away forever. That all this cannot mean the Babylonian captivity and the small remnant which returned to the land may be learned from the statement "no longer" a reproach.

Because the Lord does all this they are commanded to rejoice, the children of Zion, which does not mean a spiritual Zion, but God's only true Zion. The early and the latter rain is restored to the land. Of late this term, too, has been strangely misapplied. It has been claimed that the early and latter rain mean spiritual blessing. The early rain, it is said, means the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out, and the latter rain, these deluded people tell us, is another Pentecost, a greater manifestation of the Spirit. This latter rain, they teach, consists, according to their conception, in a restoration of "pentecostal gifts" and is especially evidenced in making strange sounds, which, it is claimed, is the original gift of tongues. This unscriptural teaching has led to all kinds of fanaticism and worse things than that.

Nowhere in the Bible is there warrant for us to believe that "the early and latter rain" has a spiritual significance. To say that the early rain and the latter rain typify blessings and manifestations of the Spirit of God, peculiar to the opening of this present age and to its close is extremely fanciful and cannot be verified by the Scriptures. It is strange that even men who seem to possess considerable light have endorsed this kind of exposition, which has worked such harm among so many Christian people. There is absolutely no prediction anywhere in the New Testament that the present age is to close with "a latter rain" experience, a time when the Holy Spirit is poured out and that in greater measure. This age, according to divine revelation, ends in apostasy and complete departure from God and His truth (2 Thess. ii:3-12). After the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, for the formation of the church, the body of Christ, there is nowhere to be found a promise in the church epistles that another outpouring is to take place, by which a part of the church is to get into possession again

of the different sign gifts. The enemy of souls has made good use of these distorted teachings to bring in his most subtle delusions.

The rain has altogether a literal meaning. Read carefully the following passages for a confirmation: Lev. xxvi:4; Deut. xi:14–17; 1 Kings viii:33-35 and Jer. iii:3.

Then all the harm done by the locusts, the army the Lord used in judging His people, will be restored. "And My people shall never be ashamed" (verse 27). This again is sufficient proof that all this remains unfulfilled.

6. The Outpouring of the Spirit Upon All Flesh: Verses 28-32. This interesting passage invites our closest attention. The almost general interpretation of this prophecy has been that it found its fulfilment on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured forth. Most expositors confine the fulfilment to that event while others claim that Pentecost was only the beginning of the fulfilment and that the event which occurred once continues to occur throughout this Christian age. We quote from one of the best commentaries. "But however certain it may be that the fulfilment took place at the first Christian feast of Pentecost, we must not stop at this one Pentecostal miracle. The address of the Apostle Peter by no means requires this limitation, but rather contains distinct indications that Peter himself saw nothing more therein than the commencement of the fulfilment, but a commencement indeed, which embraced the ultimate fulfilment, as the germ enfolds the tree; for if not only the children of the apostles' contemporaries but also those that were afar off—i. e., not foreign Jews, but the far off heathen, were to participate in the gift of the Holy Spirit, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which commenced on Pentecost must continue as long as the Lord shall receive into His Kingdom those that are still standing afar, i. e., until the fulness of the Gentiles shall have entered the kingdom of God."

There is, however, no Scriptural foundation for the statement that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit commenced on Pentecost must continue throughout this present age.

The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. He was poured out once, and nowhere in the New Testament is there a continued or repeated outpouring of the Holy Spirit promised. The difficulty with interpreting this great prophecy of Joel of having been fulfilled on Pentecost and being fulfilled throughout this age is that which follows in the next two verses. Wonders in heaven and on earth, fire, pillars of smoke, a darkened sun and a blood-red moon are mentioned, and that in connection with the day of Jehovah, which, as we have seen is the great theme of Joel's vision. These words have been generally applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, which followed the day of Pentecost. The spiritualizing method has been fully brought into play to overcome the difficulties the 30th and 31st verses raise. The terrible day of Jehovah, it is claimed, is the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus we read in the commentary of Patrick and Lowth: "This (verse 30) and the following verse principally point out the destruction of the city and the temple of Jerusalem by the Romans, a judgment justly inflicted upon the Jewish nation for their resisting the Holy Spirit and contempt of the means of grace." We quote another leading commentator on Joel ii:30, Dr. Clarke. He states: "This refers to the fearful sights, dreadful portents and destructive commotions by which the Jewish polity was finally overthrown, and the Christian religion finally established in the Roman empire. See how our Lord applies this prophecy in Matthew xxiv:29 and the parallel texts." And in verse 31 ("the sun shall be turned into darkness") Clarke says "it means the Jewish polity, civil and ecclesiastical, shall be entirely destroyed." Others give these words the same spiritualized meaning. These learned doctors tell us that Joel ii:30 and 31 relates to the destruction of the nation, and the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews! This is a fair example of the havoc which a Bible interpretation makes, which ignores the great dispensational facts revealed in the Word of God. But inasmuch as the 32d verse, the last verse in this second chapter of Joel, reveals that there shall be deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem after

these signs and wonders, and the continuation of the prophecy in the third chapter shows the judgment of the enemies of the people Israel, God's ancient people, such interpretations appear at once as fundamentally wrong.

It is strange that all these expositors use the word "fulfilment" in connection with this prophecy, saying, that Peter said that the day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of what is written by Joel. But the Holy Spirit did not use the word "fulfilment" at all. He purposely avoided such a statement. In so many passages in the New Testament we find the phrase "that it might be fulfilled," but in making use of the prophecy in Acts, chapter ii, this phrase is not used and instead of it we read that Peter said, "But this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel" (Acts ii:16). There is a great difference between this word and an out and out declaration of the fulfilment of that passage. Peter's words call the attention to the fact that something like that which took place on the day of Pentecost had been predicted by Joel, but his words do not claim that Joel's prophecy was there and then fulfilled. Nor does He hint at a continued fulfilment or coming fulfilment during this present age. The chief purpose of the quotation of that prophecy on the day of Pentecost was to point out to the Jews, many of whom were scoffing, that the miraculous thing which had happened so suddenly in their midst was fully confirmed by what Joel had foretold would be the effect of the outpouring of the Spirit. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit had taken place, but not in the full sense as given in the Prophecy of Joel. He came for a special purpose, which was the formation of the Church and for this purpose He is still on earth.

Without following the events on Pentecost and their meaning it is evident from the entire prophecy, which precedes this prediction of the outpouring of the Spirit, that these words have never been fulfilled. We might briefly ask, What is necessary according to the contents of this second chapter in Joel, before this prophecy can be accomplished? We just mention what we have already learned before in

our exposition. The people Israel must be partly restored to their land, that great invasion from the North, bringing such trouble to the land must have taken place, then there must also have come the intervention of the Lord and He must be jealous for His land and pity His people, then at that time this great outpouring of the Spirit of God will take place. It stands in the closest connection with the restoration of Israel. The promises which are Israel's (Rom. ix:4) may be grouped into two classes, those which pertain to the land, earthly blessings and supremacy over the nations, and spiritual blessings, such as knowing the Lord, walking in His ways, being a kingdom of priests and prophets. The earthly blessings are accomplished by the power of Jehovah when He is manifested as their deliverer and the spiritual blessings will be conferred upon them by the outpouring of the Spirit.

The word "afterwards" with which this prophecy is introduced refers to the same period of time as the phrase "in the latter days," that is, the days when the Lord will redeem His earthly people and be merciful to His land.

Therefore when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost it was not in fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. This prophecy has never been fulfilled nor will it be fulfilled during this present age, in which the Church is being formed, which is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. After this is accomplished the Lord will begin His relationship with His earthly people, when He appears in His day then they will experience the fulfilment of this great prediction.

There are numerous passages in the Old Testament which shed interesting light upon this future outpouring of the Spirit (see Isa. xxxii:15, xliv:3-4, lix:19-21; Ezek. xxxvi:27-28, xxxvii:14, xxxix:29).

7. Deliverance in Mount Zion and Jerusalem: Verse 32. The great coming outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh will result in salvation. It is blessedly true now that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," but it will be also true in that day. The word our Lord spoke, "Salvation is of the Jews" will find its largest fulfill-

ment. The nations will then be joined to the Lord in the kingdom (Zech. ii:11).

III. THE EVENTS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD; ISRAEL'S ENEMIES JUDGED; THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED.

CHAPTER III

1. The Judgment of the Nations. 1-8.
2. The Preceding Warfare of the Nations and How it Ends. 9-16.
3. Jehovah in the Midst of His People. 17-21.

1. The Judgment of the Nations: Verses 1-8. The first verse specifies the time when Jehovah will do what He announces in the two verses which follow. It will be in those days, in that time, when the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem is brought back. Clearly then up to this time this cannot yet have been, for the captivity of His people is not yet ended. They are still scattered in the great dispersion among the nations of the earth. The time is future when the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem is brought back. Israel, the ten tribes are not mentioned here, but they are included in the prophecy; they will likewise be brought back. Joel only mentions Judah, because His prophecy was addressed to Judah and Jerusalem. The captivity, or dispersion, which is the same thing, of the people Israel will not end till divine power accomplishes it according to the many promises in the Word of God. And when at last the heavens are silent no longer and Jehovah in His power begins to fulfil His promises and their captivity ends, it will mean judgment for the nations.

It is Jehovah Himself who speaks, what He is going to do in that day, when He arises and has mercy on Zion. "I will also bring together all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat." How the Lord will bring these nations together and then accomplish His purpose is revealed in verses 9-12. We therefore pass it by for the present till we reach the second part of this chapter. But here is also the place mentioned where this great judgment

of nations will be executed. It will be in the valley of Jehoshaphat. The word means translated "Jehovah judges." This name occurs elsewhere in the Word of God. King Jehu was the son of Jehoshaphat and he was the son of Nimshi (2 Kings ix:2). Significant names of the King who had to judge, for Jehu means "He is Jehovah;" Jehoshaphat, "Jehovah judges;" Nimshi, "Jehovah reveals."

In 2 Chronicles xx we read the account of King Jehoshaphat's victory over hostile nations. But the place where this took place is not the valley of Jehoshaphat, but it was called "Berachah," that is blessing. We mention this for some expositors have claimed that the place where King Jehoshaphat brought judgment upon these nations is the valley of which Joel speaks.

The valley of Jehoshaphat must be looked for in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem. It is generally placed in the valley of the Kidron on the East of Jerusalem. It may not yet be in existence. In Zechariah xiv we read of the same events which are here predicted. When the Lord appears His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives in that day. The Mount of Olives will then cleave in the midst and there will be formed a very *great valley* (Zech. xiv:4). This great valley may be the valley where the Lord judges the nations.

In the valley of Jehoshaphat the Lord will deal with the nations and His judgment will be on account of His people and heritage Israel. The nations scattered them and divided His land. They treated His people like slaves, casting lots for His people, sold a girl for wine and drank it.

The great sin of the nations, the Gentile world-powers, is the sin against Israel. This is repeatedly mentioned by God's prophets. The foundation of the judgment of the nations of which our Lord speaks in Matthew xxv is likewise the treatment of the Jew. Read also Psalms lxxix:1-3, lxxxiii:1-6; Isaiah xxix:1-8; xxxiv:1-3; Jeremiah xxv:13-17; Zechariah i:14-15, xii:2, 3.

In Joel's day such wickedness as described here of casting lots for His people and selling boys and girls was partially known. The Philistines had done this, as well as Tyre and

Sidon. But these words were fulfilled during the Babylonian captivity and in that great dispersion which was brought about by the Roman Empire. After the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 the very thing happened spoken by the prophet. Nearly a million and a half of human beings perished in Jerusalem and the land in that awful warfare. Over 100,000 were taken prisoners. These hundred thousand Jews were disposed by Titus according to Josephus in the following manner: "Those under seventeen years of age were publicly sold; of the remainder, some were executed immediately, some sent away to work in the Egyptian mines (which was worse than death), some kept for public shows to fight with wild beasts in all the chief cities; only the tallest and most handsome were kept for the triumphal procession in Rome." Jews were sold for so small a price as a measure of barley; thousands were thus disposed of. And what else could we add from the history of centuries, the cruel and terrible persecutions God's heritage suffered, the thousands and tens of thousands massacred, tortured, outraged and sold as slaves. Have we not beheld but recently similar horrors in Germany? And that history is not yet finished. Outbreaks of hatred against the heritage Israel are still to come and the time of Jacob's trouble soon to come will eclipse all their former suffering. It will be a time of trouble such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now nor ever shall be (Matt. xxiv:21). The day will come when the Lord will judge the nations for the evil they have done.

2. The Preceding Warfare of the Nations and How it Ends: Verses 9-16. This is a prophecy showing what precedes the judgment of these nations. The judgment hosts of the Lord, the angels, are seen coming down, then He appears in all His majesty, while sun and moon are darkened. It is a great dramatic scene which the Spirit of God unfolds. We arrange it, adding the different speakers, to bring out its full value:

The Lord speaking:

Proclaim this among the nations:
Declare a war,
Arouse the mighty ones,
Let all the men of war draw near, let them come up!

Beat your ploughshares into swords,
And your pruning hooks into spears.
Let the weak say, I am strong.

Come together
All ye nations round about
Gather yourselves together.

The Prayer of the Prophet:

Thither cause thy mighty ones to come down,
O Jehovah!

The Lord speaking:

Let the nations arise and come up
To the valley of Jehoshaphat,
For there will I sit to judge all the nations round about.

The Lord to His judgment hosts:

Put in the sickle,
For the harvest is ripe;
Come—Tread!
For the wine-press is full,
The vats overflow;
For their wickedness is great.

The Prophet beholding the gathering:

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of Jehovah is at hand in the valley of decision.

The sun and the moon are darkened
And the stars withdraw their shining.

And Jehovah shall roar from Zion
And send forth His voice from Jerusalem;
And the heavens and the earth shall shake;
But Jehovah will be a refuge for His people
And a fortress for the sons of Israel.

Throughout the prophetic Word we read that great nations confederated will oppose God and His purposes when this age closes. There will be a great Western confederacy, the restored Roman Empire (see annotations Dan. ii and vii). There will also be a great Northeastern alliance of nations. This is in view here. Consult Psalm ii, lxviii:1-6; Isaiah xxix:1-8, xxxiv:1-3; Jeremiah xxv:29-33; Ezekiel xxxviii; Zechariah xii, xiv; and Revelation xix:19. Judgment then falls upon these opposing nations. The judgment is mentioned as reaping and treading the winepress, the same as in Revelation xiv:14-20.

3. Jehovah in the midst of His People: Verses 17-21. Like nearly all the other prophetic books Joel ends with the vision of the kingdom and the Lord dwelling in the midst of His people. He will appear in all His Glory. Jehovah will be a refuge for His people. Then they will come to that knowledge which they so long refused, that the delivering Jehovah is their God. But the Jehovah who appears there is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who was in their midst and who was delivered by the people to be crucified. What a day it will be when "They will look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him" (Zech. xii:10). He will dwell in Zion, the mountain of Glory. The Glory from above will find a resting place on that holy hill. There He will be enthroned as King (Psa. ii:6). From there the glory will be spread over all (Isa. iv:5-6; Psa. lxviii:16). "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest forever; here will I dwell for I have desired it" (Psa. cxxxii:13-14). It is the literal Zion and not something spiritual. Even good expositors of the Bible have missed the mark. One good commentator says: "For Zion or Jerusalem is of course not the Jerusalem of the earthly Palestine, but the sanctified and glorified city of the living God, in which the Lord will be eternally united with His redeemed, sanctified and glorified church." Such exposition emanates from ignorance of God's purposes with His earthly people and in not dividing the Word of Truth rightly.

Joel speaks also of the judgment which will fall upon Egypt in that day. Isaiah also tells of judgment, but through him we learn that Egypt will turn to the Lord and the Lord will graciously heal Egypt (Isa. xix). Judah will abide forever. His people will be cleansed. Jehovah, our ever blessed Lord, will dwell in Zion. The happy and glorious state of the land and the whole earth during the millennium is thus tersely stated. For when He reigns there will be righteousness and peace; glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the deep. Thus ends the great vision of Joel, the son of Pethuel. May the eye of faith behold these blessed revelations and may we live in anticipation of what is soon to be.

AMOS

The Prophet Amos

INTRODUCTION

A few years before the Prophet Hosea began to witness against the apostasy of the house of Israel, the ten tribes, and announced the coming judgment, there appeared in Bethel, the seat of idolatry a peasant by name of Amos. He was not a citizen of the ten tribe kingdom, but belonged to Tekoa, a small town in the south country of Judah. We learn from the book that he was a herdman and a gatherer of the fruit of the sycamore trees. Some have thought he was a man of wealth, in possession of large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, but this cannot be confirmed. He was just an humble peasant and while engaged in his calling, not being a prophet or the son of a prophet, the Lord suddenly called him to leave his work and said unto him "Go, prophesy unto my people Israel" (chapter vii:14-15). Amos means "Bearer" or "Burden." In obedience to this command he appeared in Bethel to discharge his prophetic duty and deliver the messages of Jehovah to the people. It was a strange occurrence that a prophet should come out of Judah to prophesy to Israel, it probably attracted wide attention, for such a thing had never happened before nor after. It greatly aroused Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, who reported the case to Jeroboam, the king of Israel. The message the priest sent to the king was the following: "Amos has conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel, the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus saith Amos, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their land" (vii:10). Evidently the priest did not await the king's answer for he tried to intimidate the prophet and drive him away, but Amos was a man of courage, he boldly resisted the priest and announced the fate of the priest and his family.

THE TIME OF HIS PROPHECY

There is no difficulty connected with the age in which he prophesied. This is stated in the opening verse of the book. "In the days of Uzziah, King of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, King of Israel, two years before the earthquake." Jeroboam II became king in the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah, King of Judah. Jeroboam reigned forty-one years. As Amaziah reigned over Judah twenty-nine years and was followed by Uzziah, Jeroboam's reign was during fourteen years of Amaziah's reign and covered twenty-seven years of Uzziah's reign. Amos' activity was during the period when Uzziah was king in Judah, in the second half of Jeroboam's reign. The

earthquake which is mentioned, two years before which Amos began his work, cannot be placed chronologically. It is also mentioned by Zechariah (xiv:5). The time then is around 810-782 B. C. As we have shown in the introduction to Joel, Amos knew Joel's prophecy, because Joel preceded him by at least a half a century. Amos was therefore somewhat earlier than Hosea and part of his ministry was contemporary with Hosea.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS TIMES

Under the reign of Jeroboam II the northern kingdom of Israel flourished as never before nor after. There was a great external prosperity. Therefore, we find that the prophet mentions the rich, their great wealth and luxury, their arrogant pride and self-security and the oppression of the poor. Underneath it all was an awful moral corruption, the fruit of the false worship. In this state of prosperity, immorality and false worship they did not dream of any coming calamity whatever. Such were the days in which the herdman of Tekoa appeared upon the scene to give an inspired testimony against the nation.

THE STYLE OF AMOS

Attention has been called to the fact that the prophet's style and composition shows the former herdman in the use of certain words and in many figures and similes drawn from nature and rural life. But he also shows a very close acquaintance with the Mosiac law and the history of the people to whom he belonged. The style also shows great rhetorical power, great depths of thought, and truly poetic expressions.

"Amos expressed his thoughts in words taken from the great picture book of nature, which, being also written by the hand of God, so wonderfully expresses the things of God. Scarcely any prophet is more glowing in style, or combines more wonderfully the natural and the moral world, the Omnipotence and Omniscience of God" (Dr. Pusey). Augustinus selected Amos as an illustration of unadorned eloquence. And another learned scholar speaks of him thus, "Let any fair judge read his writings, thinking not who wrote them, but what he wrote, and he will come to the conclusion that this herdman is in no wise behind the very chiefest prophets; in the loftiness of his thoughts and the magnificence of his spirit, nearly equal to the highest; and in the splendor of his diction and the elegance of the composition scarcely inferior to any" (Bishop Lowth, "De Poesi Sacra").

He gives us a splendid example of inspiration. The Lord called him, gave him the message, filled the simple herdman with the wisdom from above so that he burst out in these eloquent utterances. At the same time the Lord in using him as His mouthpiece did not set aside his personality, he uses his shepherd idiom, and the Truth of God is ex-

pressed through him in the terms of nature, with which he, as a child of nature, was so familiar.

THE MESSAGE OF AMOS

The message concerns chiefly Israel, the ten tribe kingdom, their spiritual and moral condition, yet Judah is also noticed by him, as well as the different nations, surrounding Israel, their Gentile enemies. The book consists of the prophecies he uttered in Bethel, which follow the two introductory chapters. The people are reproved and their sins uncovered; judgment for them and for the nations is announced. The end of the book brings in the promise of deliverance and restoration. The great prophecy in the ninth chapter (ix:11-12) was quoted by James in the first great church-council in Jerusalem (Acts xv).

The Division of the Book of Amos

The Book of Amos consists of three parts. The first part comprises the two opening chapters which form the introduction to the book. In them we find the judgments announced in store for the nations surrounding Israel, but Judah and Israel are also included.

From the third chapter to the end of the sixth is the second part. Here are recorded four prophecies given by the Lord through Amos. Three of them begin with "Hear this Word" and the last in chapter six begins with "Woe." The third part, chapters seven to nine, give the five visions which Amos had. The first two judgment visions were not carried out on account of the intercession of the prophet. The third vision is that of the plumb-line; the fourth, the vision of the basket with ripe fruit. In the last vision he beheld the Lord standing alongside of the altar, ready to smite. The conclusion of the ninth chapter is a prophecy concerning the restoration of Israel, the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David and the blessings of the Kingdom. We follow this division.

I. **JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS, JUDAH AND ISRAEL.** Chapters i-ii.

II. **THE PROPHETIC MESSAGES UNCOVERING THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.** Chapters iii-vi.

III. **THE FIVE VISIONS OF THE PROPHET.** Chapters vii-ix.

Analysis and Annotations

I. JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED AGAINST THE NATIONS, JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Chapters i–ii

CHAPTER I

1. The Introduction. 1-2.
2. Damascus. 3-5.
3. Philistia. 6-8.
4. Tyre. 9-10.
5. Edom. 11-12.
6. Ammon. 13-15.

1. The Introduction. It has been pointed out that Amos does not say like so many of the other prophets, "the Word of the Lord which came unto me," but he begins his prophecy with the statement "the words of Amos." The fact of divine inspiration, however, is expressed in the next words, "which he saw." His messages, like the messages of all the prophets, were given to him in vision. As stated in the general introduction to this book, this first verse determines the exact time when the herdman of Tekoa appeared with his message. The earthquake mentioned must have been a disastrous one, for there was a great flight of people (see Zech. xiv:5).

Then follows his first utterance which Joel recorded in his prophecy, "the Lord roars out of Zion." Inasmuch as Joel prophesied in Judah and Amos appeared from Judah in Bethel of the ten tribe kingdom, this sentence of coming judgment was probably unknown to his hearers. He sounded the alarm at once as to the coming judgment on account of which the shepherds would mourn and the beautiful, luxurious Carmel would wither; it would bring disaster upon all.

2. Damascus: Verses 3-5. Six nations are mentioned against which judgment is announced, five in this chapter

and Moab in the beginning of the second. Eight times we read "saith the Lord." Then in each judgment prediction we find the phrase, "for three transgressions or four . . . I will not reverse it." The meaning of it is that the measure is full and that the judgment cannot be averted. Fire is prominently mentioned as the mode of judgment. These nations were the enemies of Israel. The Syrians were the great enemies of Israel and treated them with awful cruelties. The threshing of Gilead with iron instruments took place when Hazael of Damascus conquered the land east of Jordan (2 Kings x:32-33; xiii:7). Hazael murdered Benhadad and Elisha predicted all the horrible things he would do to Israel. When the Man of God wept and Hazael asked him the reason, Elisha answered, "Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel; their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child" (2 Kings viii:12). Damascus was broken and the predicted judgment came. It was executed through the King of Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser, who drove the Syrians back to Kir, from which they had come (2 Kings xvi:9).

3. Philistia: Verses 6-8. Philistia is represented by Gaza. They also mistreated Israel and sold them into the hands of Edom (2 Chron. xxi:16). The cities of Philistia, Gaza and its palaces would be consumed by fire. There would be an end to the Philistines, "the remnant of the Philistines shall perish saith the Lord."

4. Tyre: Verses 9-10. Tyrus, the capital of Phoenicia, had also sinned against Israel by delivering them into the hands of their great enemy Edom. Their sin was especially heinous because David and Solomon had made a covenant with the King of Tyre, hence no king of Judah or Israel had ever warred against Tyre (2 Sam. v:11; 1 Kings v:1-5).

5. Edom: Verses 11-12. Edom was closely related to Israel, yet they hated more than the heathen nations hated Israel. At every opportunity Edom expressed this hatred by deeds of cruelty. What an awful record! "He did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his

anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever." In Obadiah we find more concerning Edom.

6. Ammon: Verses 13-15. Wicked Ammon had tried to exterminate the people for selfish reasons "to enlarge their border." What horrible deeds to rip open women with child! Nor is this confined to the barbarous warfare of 3,000 years ago; the same was done in other wars down to our own days. Judgment would overtake them also.

In meditating on these terse judgment messages we must remember while these nations of the past have ceased existing as nations, and the predicted judgment came long ago, that these nations are typical of the other nations, who also sin against Israel and whose judgment will come "in that day."

CHAPTER II

1. Moab. 1-3.
2. Judah. 4-5.
3. Israel. 6-16.

1. Moab: Verses 1-3. So fierce was the hatred of Moab that they dishonored the bones of the king of Edom. "Moab burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime" (see 2 Kings iii:26-27). The fire of judgment came upon Moab and her glory, too, departed like the glory of the other nations.

2. Judah: Verses 4-5. While the measure was full of these nations, who had heaped transgressions upon transgressions, Judah and Israel were as guilty, yea, even more guilty, than these nations. The same significant phrase "for three transgressions and four" is used in connection with both. If the punishment of the nations could not be held back, but had to come, so Judah and Israel could not escape. Judah's sin was the rejection of the law of the Lord; instead of listening to the voice of the Lord and to His prophets, they harkened to the false prophets, who, with their lies, caused them to err, and the children walked in the evil footsteps of their fathers. The sin of Judah was apostasy. That is the great sin today among the professing

people of God, Christendom. Fire was to devour the cities and palaces of the nations and fire was to come upon Judah and the palaces of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar fulfilled this prophecy.

3. Israel: Verses 6-16. Inasmuch as Amos was sent to Israel the indictment and judgment of them occupies more space than the rest. Verses 6-8 give a description of their sins. The poor suffered through their coveteousness, they lived in unspeakable vileness, they were idolatrous. Those who were condemned by judges and paid their fines furnished the money to the judges to buy wine for their heathenish orgies.

Then the Lord reminds them of all His mercies and loving kindness in the past. He destroyed the Amorite; He led them through the wilderness to possess the land. He instituted the Nazarite. In spite of all these manifold mercies they continued in their evil ways, grinding the poor, defying God and His law and in their moral depravity

> "Behold, I will press you down
> As the full cart presses the sheaves.
> Then shall flight be lost to the swift,
> And the strong shall not confirm his strength,
> And the hero shall not save his life.
> He that beareth the bow shall not stand,
> And the swift-footed shall not save,
> And the rider of the horse shall not save his life."

II. THE PROPHETIC MESSAGES UNCOVERING THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE

Chapters iii-vi

CHAPTER III

The First Discourse

1. There is Cause for Judgment. 1-8.
2. The Coming Judgment Visitation. 9-15.

1. There is Cause for Judgment: Verses 1-8. "Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You have I only known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." This is the solemn beginning of the special messages addressed to the nation by the humble herdman of Tekoa. The Lord had singled them out from the other nations. He had separated them unto Himself. With His mighty power and outstretched arm He had delivered them from the house of bondage and brought them to the land promised unto their fathers. He had revealed Himself and made known His will to them exclusively. He had entered with them into covenant and called them to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod. xix:6). Hence their responsibility was very great, for the degree of relationship is always the degree of responsibility. The divine election of the twelve tribes does not insure against punishment, but that intimate relationship into which the Lord had entered with Israel broken and violated by sin, demanded a correspondingly great punishment. To whomsoever much is given of him shall much be required. Our Lord expressed the same truth in Matthew xi when he denounced the cities in which great miracles had been done and they believed not and declared that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for them.

To demonstrate the rightful cause of judgment Amos speaks now in a number of brief similes. There are six of them in the form of questions. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Fellowship is only possible on the ground of separation; a holy God demands a holy people. In their state of licentious idolatry and gross injustice the Lord could not own them. Then follow brief questions indicating that which would happen to them. Like a roaring lion, or a young lion, the Lord would come upon them. They will be caught in a snare and a trap. The blowing of the trumpet denotes that evil was to come upon them. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord

has not done it?" It is hard to believe that certain men have taken this statement and teach on account of it that God is the author of moral evil—of sin. The context shows that this is not in view here at all. A holy God who cannot be tempted with evil, who is light and in whom there is no darkness at all, does not put moral evil in the world. The evil is of a punitive character such as invasion by hostile forces, the sword, the famine and the pestilence.

And the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants, the prophets. These secrets are made known to us in the prophetic Word and not, as some claim, in special visions. The Spirit of God, the author of the Word, shows to God's people in His Word things to come (John xv:15; 1 Cor. ii:10-16). The result of such knowledge of the secrets of the Lord concerning the future is stated in 2 Peter iii:17, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" (see also 2 Peter iii:14).

2. The Coming Judgment Visitation: Verses 9-15. This paragraph begins with a striking call. The speaker is the Lord and He addresses the prophets and commands them to cry in the palaces of Ashdod (Philistia) and in Egypt so that they may see and know the wicked acts of Samaria, and thus bear witness against Israel. Thus the Lord exposed them to their enemies. Then the coming adversary is announced who would encircle the land and humiliate the proud nation, so that her palaces would be spoiled. Then the herdman speaks in a parable familiar to him from his life as a shepherd. When the beast of prey devours a sheep the shepherd must bring proof of it, so he is anxious to recover a part of the slain animal and tries to snatch away from the devouring lion either the legs of the sheep, or even a small piece of the ear, so as to show the rest was eaten by the lion. Such would be the case with the people in their luxurious living, and only a small remnant is to escape the coming slaughter by the lion, the Gentile world power. The transgressions of Israel will be visited; the idol altars of

Bethel will be overthrown in that visitation and all their prosperity and luxury would then end and instead of living in winter and summer houses, they would become homeless.

CHAPTER IV

The Second Discourse

1. Divine Threatening and Irony. 1-5.
2. Yet Have Ye Not Returned Unto Me. 6-11.
3. Prepare to Meet Thy God. 12-13.

1. Divine Threatening and Irony: Verses 1-5. The prophet addresses them as "kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria." The cows of Bashan were noted for their sleek and well-fed condition, feeding on the choicest of pasture. The term is descriptive of Israel's prosperous condition as well as their beastly character. They were selfish and cruel, for they oppressed the poor and crushed the needy. It seems that women are mostly here in view, which explains the fact that the comparison is with kine and not with bulls. They asked their masters to supply them means for debauchery. But what happens to dumb cattle would happen to them in their luxurious and selfish life. They would be taken with hooks and their posterity with fish-hooks, and they would be taken away. The last sentence of verse 3 is correctly translated "Ye shall be cast away to Har (mountain) Monah." It has been surmised that this means Armenia.

Then follows a statement of bitter irony. "Go to Bethel and sin; at Gilgal multiply transgression." Go on in your idolatry in these sacred places of your past history! In Bethel the Lord had revealed Himself to their progenitor Jacob; in Gilgal on the banks of the Jordan, the reproach of Egypt had been rolled away (Joshua v), and these favored places were now the scenes of their wicked idolatries. It is also mockery when the prophet says, "Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven," for leaven always typifies sin.

2. Yet Have Ye Not Returned Unto Me: Verses 6-11. The Lord had sent different chastisements upon them at different times. There had been famines, drought; yea, it

had rained here and there, while plots of ground received rain others remained parched, so that they might recognize in it the hand of God. He smote them with mildew and blasting; the locusts came and devoured vegetation; there were frightful pestilences and other judgments, but they did not return unto Him. Five times in this paragraph we find the same statement, "Yet have ye not returned unto Me." They were an impenitent nation and hardened their hearts as Pharaoh did. They were incorrigible, though they knew that through His mercy they were "as a firebrand plucked out of the burning."

In the book of Revelation we read of a similar condition in the coming days when the Lord deals with the earth in the decreed and revealed judgments. It is written that the inhabiters of the earth, in spite of these judgments falling upon the earth, do not repent of their sins.

4. Prepare to Meet Thy God: Verses 12-13. And now they were to come face to face with Himself as the Judge.

CHAPTER V

The Third Discourse

1. The Lamentation. 1-3.
2. Seek the Lord and Ye Shall Live. 4-15.
3. The Wailing. 16-20.
4. The Captivity Announced. 21-27.

1. The Lamentation: Verses 1-3. This chapter begins with a lamentation over the fallen daughter of Israel. "She shall no more rise" has been used as an argument against the future and literal restoration of Israel. The prophet has only the present government of God over that generation in view and does not deny at all a future rising as so abundantly predicted in the prophetic Word. "There is none to raise her up," nor could she raise herself up. But the day will come when the Lord in grace will raise her.

2. Seek the Lord and Ye Shall Live: Verses 4-15. Here the Lord entreats Israel once more to desist from her idolatrous way and to seek Him instead of the worship at Bethel

and Gilgal, for judgment would surely be executed there. "Seek ye Me and ye shall live." Then again, "Seek the Lord and ye shall live," and in case of disobedience He, whom they refused, would fall like fire upon the house of Joseph. The house of Joseph is mentioned because the tribe of Ephraim was the most powerful tribe in the kingdom of Israel, and Joseph was the father of Ephraim. Again they are told to seek Him "Who maketh the seven stars (the Pleiades) and Orion." These two great constellations were well known to the ancients (see Job ix:9 and xxxviii:31). And He also turneth the shadow of death into morning and darkeneth day to night. This is an illustration of the judicial actions of the Lord. As in nature He turns night into day, and the day into dark night, so He turns the deepest misery and sorrow into joy and happiness, and changes the bright day of prosperity into the night of woe and disaster. He is the Lord of judgment, who controls the waters of tribulation and wrath, the floods of judgment, and makes them pass over the earth.

Verses 10-13 give a description of the moral condition of Israel. They were unrighteous and loved the ways of unrighteousness; if the judge in the gate judged righteously they hated him for it, those who spoke uprightly they abhorred. The poor they trampled into the dust and extorted the distribution of corn from them. They had built fine houses of hewn stone, but they were not to enjoy them nor the wine from their pleasant vineyards (see Deut. xxviii:30, 39). The Lord knew their transgressions and the greatness of their sins.

Still there was hope, for the Lord is merciful and slow to anger. Judgment is His strange work. Therefore once more we hear His pleadings, "Seek good and not evil that ye may live, and so the Lord God of hosts shall be with you, as ye have spoken." "Hate evil and love good!"

3. The Wailing: Verses 16-20. As judgment comes there shall be wailing in the streets, wailing with the husbandman, and there will be wailing in all vineyards as the Lord passes through in His judgment. "For I will pass through thee"

reminds us of Egypt in the Passover night when the Lord passed through Egypt to smite. And now the death wail was soon to be heard in the midst of His people.

And still another evil was in their midst. Some of them brazenly desired the announced "Day of the Lord," the day of His manifestation to come. It originated in their false boast that they are the covenant people. They knew from the former prophets that the day of the Lord would rid them of their enemies, then Israel would be fully redeemed and blest and the Lord's glory would be manifested in the sight of the nations. Such was Joel's vision concerning "that day." Such was their false hope while they lived on in sin. But the herdman, Amos, pronounced a woe upon them for desiring that day. What good will that day be to the impenitent nation? It is a day of darkness and not light. Then follows a parable such as a child of nature, as Amos was, would make. He describes a man who flees from a lion and fortunately escapes; but then he meets a bear; him he escapes likewise. Exhausted he reaches his house, and like one about to faint, he leans his hand on the wall; a small serpent out of the crevice bites him and he perishes miserably. So would be the day of the Lord overtake them. How different it is with the true believer. He desires, not the Day of the Lord, but the Coming of Him, who has promised His own, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also."

4. The Captivity Announced: Verse 21-27. The Lord despised their outward worship; their feast days and different offerings were not well pleasing in His sight. It was all a hollow pretense of honoring Him, and all their songs were hateful to Him.

But this departure from Him was not a new thing in their history. They were always a stiffnecked people. Even in the wilderness did they not bring Him sacrifices and offerings, but instead they bore the tabernacle of Moloch and Chiun (or the booth of your king and the pedestal of your images, the star of your gods). Then follows the verdict, "Therefore

will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is the God of Hosts."

CHAPTER VI

The Fourth Discourse

1. Woe to Them That Are at Ease in Zion. 1-6.
2. The Punishment Announced. 7-14.

1. Woe to Them That Are at Ease in Zion: Verse 1-6. This woe concerns the great men, the chiefs of the nation, who were sunk into a godless self-security, and dreamt on in their darkness, while the clouds of judgment were gathering above them. They were to go from Calneh to Hamath and then down to Gath of the Philistines. Calneh was built by Nimrod in the land of Shinar (Genesis x:10); Hamath was the capital of a Syrian kingdom, and Gath the center of Philistia. These places were the places of vileness and corruption. But were the kingdoms of both Judah and Israel any better than these?

While some desired the day of the Lord others put it far off, they refused to believe that judgment was impending. It was so in Ezekiel's time when the people said "The days are prolonged and every vision faileth" (Ezekiel xii:22). So it is in Christendom. The evil servant (Matthew xxiv) says "My Lord delayeth his coming," and as a result he acts outrageously. What were the results in Israel when the evil day was put far off? They committed violence; violence increased in the land. They lived luxuriously on beds of ivory and ate the best of the flock. They danced and made merry; they drank wine but none was exercised over the hurt of Joseph, the spiritual condition of the people.

2. The Punishment announced: Verse 7-14. They were now to go away as captives. There should be utter desolation. There would be a multitude of dead, so that they could not follow their ancient custom in burying them; they would have to burn them. Then the one who burns the corpses asks the last person in the house whether there is

any one still with him, and the answer is No, but keep silence! For the name of the Lord is not to be invoked. It means that the speaker fears that the other one might mention the name of the Lord and in doing so bring down upon himself an additional judgment. Everything is to be smitten. What they had done could no more secure blessing and salvation than horses could run upon a rock and one plowing upon a rock with oxen. The nation which is announced in the last verse is the Assyrian.

III. THE FIVE VISIONS OF THE PROPHET.

Chapter vii-ix.

CHAPTER VII

Three Visions and the Opposition Against Amos

1. The Vision of Locusts. 1-3.
2. The Vision Concerning the Fire. 4-6.
3. The Vision of the Plumbline. 7-9.
4. Opposition Against Amos. 10-17.

1. The Vision of Locusts: Verse 1-3. In the first vision Amos saw how the Lord prepared locusts (not grasshoppers as in the A. V.). They started in with their destructive work, just as they did in the days of Joel. Then Amos interceded in behalf of the sinful nation, "O Lord, God, forgive, I beseech Thee, by whom shall Jacob rise for he is small?" He confessed and pleaded forgiveness, acknowledging their helplessness. With such a spirit the Lord is well pleased and the praying prophet received the answer from the Lord, "It shall not be."

2. The Vision Concerning the Fire: Verse 4-6. He beheld a furious fire sweeping everything before itself so that it even devoured the great deep, the floods of water. This represents a more severe judgment than the previous one. This judgment also was kept back by the intercession of the prophet. But when the time came for judgment by the Assyrian, symbolized by the locusts and the fire, no intercession could change it. Tiglath-Pileser and Shalam-

aneser finally made an end of the sinful ten tribe kingdom.

3. The Vision of the Plumbline: Verse 7-9. He saw the Lord standing upon a wall with the plumbline to see if the wall was straight. The test by God's Word and God's holy law shows that all is crooked and must be condemned. Therefore, the announcement, "I shall pass by it no more. And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." The false worship and the monarchy in Israel will be completely swept away by the judgment.

4. Opposition Against Amos: Verse 10-17. This is an interesting and instructive occurrence. Amaziah, the apostate priest at Bethel, who had charge of the idol worship, accused the prophet falsely before King Jeroboam. It was a religious political accusation. Thus the enemy accused Jeremiah also (Jeremiah xxxvii:14-15); he did the same with our Lord and His apostles. At the same time Amaziah, the priest, sent an insulting message to Amos, saying, "Seer, go and flee into the land of Judah, and eat there thy bread; there thou mayest prophesy." He tried to intimidate him, urging him to return to Tekoa in Judah where he came from. He received a courageous answer from the herdman-prophet. "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I was a herdman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. The Lord took me from following the flock; He said unto me, Go and prophesy to my people Israel."

The insinuation was that Amos prophesied for the sake of a living. Amos refutes the false charge and then announced the doom of the false priest and the doom of his family.

CHAPTER VIII

The Fourth Vision; The Basket With Summer Fruit

1. The Vision. 1-3.
2. Israel Ripe For Judgment. 4-10.
3. The Coming Days of Famine. 11-14.

1. The Vision: Verse 1-3. In his fourth vision the

prophet beholds a basket of summer fruit. The Hebrew shows that it was a basket filled with ripe fruit. The ripe fruit is a symbol that Israel was ripe for the harvest of judgment. The message of the Lord to the prophet is, "The end is come upon my people Israel; I will not again pass by them any more." The songs would be changed into howling lamentations and many should be slain.

2. Israel Ripe For Judgment. Verse 4-10. Once more the wealthy and prosperous portion of the nation is addressed, their sinful practices are exposed and it is shown that they were ripe for judgment. The rich oppressed the poor; they took away from the poor what belonged rightfully to them. They cheated by making the measure small and increased the price. They were the profiteers of that time. They also used false balances. Then they sold the refuse of the wheat. All may be compared with James v:1-6 where the same conditions are pictured, prevailing in Christendom, before the Lord comes. For all this they did the land would have to tremble and every one mourn.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." Much nonsense has been written on this verse especially from the side of the Adventists, as if there has been at a certain time "a dark day" in fulfillment of this prophecy. Some expositors have made of it a mere eclipse of the sun. The verse, while it has a certain application to that generation, whose glory should end like the sun going down at noon, has its final meaning in the coming day of the Lord, which all the prophets announced. It is the same our Lord predicts in Matthew xxiv:29-30. For Israel the bitter day of mourning, lamentation and woe would come.

3. The Coming Days of Famine: Verse 11-14. A great famine is announced. It is not to be a famine for bread, or thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. His word and the light of His revelation is to be completely withdrawn from them. The Word of the Lord which they despised they would then desire to seek in vain.

They will wander hither and thither from sea to sea, from the north to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord and shall not find it. Such was the case with them when the cruel Assyrian power took hold on them and carried them away. Such a judgment too is fast approaching for Christendom which in its apostasy rejects the Word of the Lord, turns to fables, till the day comes when the Spirit will leave and as a result there will be a famine of the Word, no comfort and no help for those who are ripe for judgment.

CHAPTER IX

The Passing of a Kingdom and the Coming of the Kingdom

1. The Fifth Vision. The Passing of a Kingdom. 1-10.
2. The Coming of the Kingdom. 11-15.

1. The Fifth Vision. The Passing of a Kingdom: Verses 1-10. In his fifth vision the prophet saw the Lord standing by the altar. He utters His word. The description of what is to take place is very vivid. He stands by the altar and the people are assembled before Him. He smites the lintel of the door, so that everything trembles and the building falls upon them, cutting all of them in the head and none can escape. Even if they break into sheol (not hell, but the world of spirits in the unknown regions), from thence His hand will take them; if they climb into heaven, He would bring them down. If they hide themselves on the top of Carmel He would search for them and take them out. If they conceal themselves from His sight in the bottom of the sea, He would command the serpent to bite them. It is to be an all consuming judgment with no possibility of escape.

Even as they went into captivity the sword of judgment would follow them. "Thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them; and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good." He is the Lord who has all power to do this (verses 5-6). They had degraded themselves down to the level of the heathen nations, hence they were unto Him like the Ethiopians. Then He calls them "the

sinful kingdom." This kingdom is to pass away from the face of the earth; there is no hope for its restoration. But the Lord in mercy promises that the house of Jacob is not utterly to be destroyed. In His own time He will assemble the outcasts of Israel with dispersed Judah and lead them back to their land. In the meantime they will be sifted among all nations, as wheat is sifted in a sieve, but not the least grain shall fall on the ground. The sinners of His people will die by the sword.

2. The Coming of the Kingdom: Verses 11-15. While the sinful kingdom, the ten tribe kingdom of Israel is passed away and will never come into existence again, there is another kingdom which will come, into which Judah and Israel will be gathered with the nations of the earth. This kingdom of heaven, promised to David, is now announced by the prophet. "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old." This prophesy is quoted by James in Acts xv:15-16 at the first great church council held in Jerusalem. On that occasion the Holy Spirit used the prophecy of Amos to unfold the program of God concerning the future. Yet there is no church council, no General Conference, General Assembly or General Association which reckons in any way with that which the Spirit of God has laid down as the program of the Future. We learn from the passage in Acts that during this age the Gentiles are visited to gather out from among them a people for His Name (the church). When this is accomplished the Lord returns, and, as a result of His return, the restoration of the tabernacle of David takes place: that is, the kingdom will be restored to His people, the Kingdom of heaven comes and the Lord Jesus Christ will be enthroned as its king upon the throne of David. Then the conversion of the world will take place.

This is seen here in the passage before us. Verse 12 tells us that when the tabernacle of David is raised up, when "that day" has come, His people restored and saved will possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations. The last

three verses of the prophecy of Amos describe the millennium in its earthly blessings. It also shows the permanent blessing and glory into which redeemed and restored Israel has entered, "They shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God."

OBADIAH

The Prophet Obadiah

INTRODUCTION

Of Obadiah we know nothing but his name, which means "Servant of Jehovah." There are numerous men mentioned in the Old Testament by that name, but it is impossible to identify any one of these with Obadiah, or to trace him. "The silence of Holy Scriptures as to the Prophet Obadiah stands in remarkable contrast with the anxiety of men to know something of him. They hoped that Obadiah might prove to have been the faithful protector of the prophets under Ahab; or the son of the Shunamite, whom Elijah called to life, or the Obadiah whom Jehoshaphat sent to teach in the cities of Judah, or the Levite who was selected, with one other, to be the overseer set over the repair of the temple in the reign of Josiah. Fruitless guesses at what God has hidden! God has willed that his name alone and this brief prophecy should be known in this world" (Dr. Pusey).

Inasmuch as nothing is known of this man of God, nor anything stated under whose reign he uttered his prophecy, the guesses about the time he lived are numerous and very contradictory. The critics have assigned to Obadiah dates removed from each other by above 600 years. We quote again from Pusey's commentary: "The punishment of Edom the Prophet clearly foretells, as yet to come; the destruction of Jerusalem, which, according to our version is spoken of as past, is in reality foretold also. Unbelief denies all prophecy. Strange, that unbelief, denying the existence of a jewel—God's authentic and authenticated voice to man—should trouble itself about the age of the casket in which the jewel rests. Yet so it was. The Prophets of Israel used a fascinating power over those who denied their inspiration. They denied prophecy, but employed themselves about the Prophets. Unbelief denying prophecy had to find out two events in history, which should correspond with these two events in this Prophet—a capture of Jerusalem and a subsequent judgment of Edom. And since Jerusalem was first taken under Shishak, king of Egypt, in the fifth year of Rehoboam 970 B. C., and Josephus tells us that 301 B. C. Ptolemy Lagus treacherously got possession of Jerusalem, unbelieving criticism has a wide range in which to vacillate. And so it reeled to and fro between these two periods, 970 B. C. and 301 B. C."

Obadiah does certainly not belong to the Prophets of the captivity, nor to the post exilic Prophets. The position given to him in the Hebrew arrangement of the prophetic books bears witness to that. The internal evidence shows that he is one of the earliest Prophets, if not the earliest. If we turn to Jeremiah xlix:7-22 we find a very striking similarity between the words of Jeremiah and the words of Obadiah

concerning Edom. The question is whether Jeremiah used Obadiah's words or Obadiah made use of Jeremiah's message. It has been pointed out that it is a peculiar characteristic of Jeremiah that he often leans upon the utterances of the earlier Prophets, and in his writing their thoughts, words and symbols are often reproduced. Compare Jeremiah xlvii with Isaiah xiv:28-32; Jeremiah xlvii with Isaiah xv and xvi; Jeremiah xlix:1-6 with Amos i:13-15, etc. When we point out this characteristic of the Book of Jeremiah we do not mean to say that this man of God was a copyist, who slavishly copied the utterances of the earlier prophets. He had the books, or scrolls, of the earlier Prophets before himself and the Spirit of God led him to use them; thus the Spirit of God repeated through Jeremiah the testimony of his predecessors and confirmed their God-given utterances. Jeremiah knew and possessed the prophecy of Obadiah, so that we can say with certainty that Obadiah is earlier than Jeremiah.

Now, Obadiah in his utterance lays bare the wicked behavior of Edom in a time when Judah and Jerusalem was plundered by hostile forces. The statement of some of the critics that the eleventh verse means only the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar is an assumption. The fact is the Prophet does not speak of the destruction of the city, but that Jerusalem was plundered.

Can this historically be located? There can be no question but it must have reference to the time when the Philistines and the Arabs invaded the city in the reign of King Jehoram. Then the Edomites threw off the Judean supremacy (2 Kings viii:20-22; 2 Chronicles xxi:8-10). They also planned a great massacre of the Jews who were in the land of Edom at that time (Joel iii:19; Amos i:11). It was then that the treacherousness of Edom and its evil spirit became fully manifested. But there can be no question, as we show in the annotations, that the description of their evil spirit against their kin includes the after history, the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzer, the opposition of Edom during the times of the Maccabees and the future revival and doom of Edom. It is, therefore, quite well established that Obadiah lived and uttered his prophecy during the reign of Jehoram.

Obadiah

(In a corrected version).

1. The Vision of Obadiah,
   Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning Edom:
   We have heard tidings from Jehovah,
   And an ambassador is sent among the nations.
   Arise ye! Let us arise against her to battle!

2. Behold, I have made thee small among the nations;
   Greatly art thou despised!

3. The pride of thy heart has deceived thee,
   Thou dweller in the clefts of the rock, in lofty
   habitation;
   Who saith in his heart:
   Who will bring me down to the ground?

4. Though as high like the eagle,
   And though thou hast made thy nest among the stars,
   Thence will I bring thee down,
   Whispers Jehovah.

5. If thieves came to thee.
   If robbers by night—
   How art thou destroyed!
   Would they not steal until they had enough?
   If grape gatherers had come unto thee,
   Would they not leave some?

6. How is Edom searched out
   His hidden things laid bare!

7. Even to the border
   Have all the men of the covenant sent thee;
   They have deceived thee, prevailed against thee,
   Those that were at peace with thee;
   Thy bread have they placed as a snare under thee.
   There is no understanding in him.

8. Will not I in that day,
   Whispers Jehovah,
   Destroy the wise out of Edom,
   And understanding out of mount Esau?

9. And thy valiant ones, O Teman, shall be dismayed,
When every man is cut off from mount Esau
By slaughter.

10. For the violence of thy brother Jacob,
Shame shall cover thee,
And thou shalt be cut off forever.

11. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side,
In the day when strangers took captive his army
And foreigners entered his gates,
And o'er Jerusalem cast lots,
Thou also wast one of them.

12. And thou shouldest not have looked on the day of
thy brother,
On the day of his calamity;
Thou shouldest not have rejoiced over the sons of Judah
In the day of their destruction;
Nor spoken proudly in the day of distress.

13. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my
people
In the day of their ruin.
Thou shouldest not have looked on his misfortune
In the day of his calamity.
And stretched not out thy hand for his possession
In the day of his destruction.

14. And thou shouldest not have stood at the cross-roads
To cut off his fugitives;
Neither shouldest thou have delivered up his remnant
In the day of Distress.

15. For near is the Day of Jehovah upon all nations.
As thou hast done will they do to thee;
Thy reward will be upon thy head.

16. For as ye have drunken on the mountain of my
holiness,
All the nations shall drink continually,
And drink and swallow down,
And be as though they had never been.

17. But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance; there shall
be holiness;
And the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

18. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire,
And the house of Joseph a flame,
And the house of Esau for stubble;
And they will kindle upon them and devour them,
And there shall be none remaining of the house of Esau;
For Jehovah has spoken it.

19. And the South country shall possess the mountain of
Esau,
And the plain the Philistines;
And they shall possess the fields of Ephraim,
And the field of Samaria;
And Benjamin shall possess Gilead.

20. And the captives of this army of the children of Israel
Will possess of the Canaanites as far as Zarepath,
And the captives of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
Shall possess the cities of the South.

21. And Saviours shall go up on mount Zion,
To judge the mountain of Esau.
And the Kingdom shall be Jehovah's.

Analysis and Annotations

The brief prophecy of Obadiah is composed of two parts. Verses 1-16 concern Edom and its destruction and verses 17-21 reveal the establishment of the Kingdom in Israel and Israel's restoration and victory. We shall give brief annotations to assist in the understanding of this prophecy by making a threefold division:

1. Edom's Humiliation and Ruin (verses 1-9). 2. Edom's Sin Against Israel and the Day of the Lord (verses 10-16). 3. The Kingdom and the Restoration of Israel (verses 17-21).

1. Edom's Humiliation and Ruin: Verses 1-9. In order to understand Obadiah's prophecy, Edom's origin and history must be taken into consideration. The Edomites were the offspring of Esau. Of him it was said that Esau the Elder should serve Jacob the younger. The character of Esau was soon manifested and his offspring soon became powerful. In Genesis xxxvi we read of the generations of Esau, who is Edom; there the dukes, the national chiefs, are prominently mentioned. Long before Israel had kings, Edom had such rulers, "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel" (Gen. xxxvi:31). In Exodus xv we read of the dukes in Edom being amazed and in Numbers xx of the King of Edom. His outrageous behavior towards the kin of Edom is recorded in Numbers xx:14-21. Though the children of Israel promised not to drink the waters in the territory of Edom, or take their fruit without paying for it, Edom refused to give Israel passage; while Israel turned meekly away from Edom. Thus Edom branded itself as the enemy of the people of God. They had an undying hatred against the children of Israel, the sons of Jacob. They had an envious dislike of the people of God. Later it was attacked by Saul and conquered for David by Joab (2 Sam. viii). During the reign of Jehoram (or Joram) they revolted and gained independence.

When Judah and Israel began to decline Edom became

more and more arrogant and rejoiced in the evil which came upon the people of God. Their dwelling place was the former possession of the Horim, a race which lived in caves in the mountainous region, much like the prehistoric cave dwellers on the North American continent. Edom possessed then the so-called troglodyte dwelling places cut into the cliffs of sandstone; these rocky habitations were suited to their warlike character and gave them the shelter they needed. Hence they are mentioned in verse 3 as "dwelling in the clefts of the rock." The ruins of Petra still bear witness to its former grandeur. The wickedness of Edom continued and when the Chaldeans came to destroy Jersualem they also seemed to have shown their hatred. We read in Psalm cxxxvii:7, "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who said raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof." They were also in evidence during the Maccabean period and later in the person of Herod the Great, an Edomite, reigned in Jerusalem. The judgment pronounced upon Idumea, their dwelling place, has found a startling fulfillment.

But this does not end the story of Edom; there will be a future revival of Edom and an ultimate history. This will be at the close of the age, when the Lord regathers all Israel and Judah and ten tribes will be reunited, then and before Edom will appear once more in prominence. No one knows where and what Edom is today. One might almost surmise that the Turk must have some connection with Edom in his horrible hatred and outrages against the Armenians, who, as it is claimed by some, may contain remnants of the ten tribes. But all this is mere speculation. When God's time comes the Edomite will be known and play his final role. Once more they will manifest their national, undying hatred against the sons of Jacob, but Israel victorious will lay their hand on Edom (Isa. xi:14).

We read of this future judgment upon the country of Edom, Idumea, in Isaiah xxxiv:6:

"And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their

hosts shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment." It is unfulfilled to the present time, but it will be fulfilled when "the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea" (verse 6), that is, in the future day of the Lord. As the context shows in Isaiah xxxiv:8, it will be that day, "For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion." Then comes the utter desolation of Edom (Isa. xxxiv:9-17; see also Ezek. xxv:12-14, xxxv; Isa. lxiii:3 and Lam. iv:21-22). While Obadiah's prophecy has been partially fulfilled; it awaits its final accomplishment in the day of the Lord.

The Prophecy begins with the announcement that tidings had come from the Lord which was heard by the Prophet and by the people; an ambassador is sent forth among the nations to summon them to go up in battle against Edom. The hour for Edom's overthrow has come. The Lord had made them small among the nations. It was pride which brought them low so that they would be greatly despised. As the dwellers in the rocks they thought themselves secure and boasted of it by saying, "Who will bring me down to the ground?" But the humiliation of Edom had been decreed by the Lord and no power could arrest its execution. Their nests were high as the eagles, yea, even so high that their habitations seemed to be among the stars, yet the Lord would bring them down. His destruction would be complete; the spoilers would not be like the thieves, who steal till they have enough; or like the grape-gatherers who leave something behind. There would be a clean sweep, everything searched out, even the hidden things. Even those in whom they trusted, with whom Edom made a covenant would deceive them and prevail against Edom. Those with whom they made an alliance and gave hospitality would turn against Edom and prove treacherous, though they had eaten bread with them. Their friends

of the heathen nations, whom they stirred up against Israel, would forsake them completely and the Lord would destroy the wise out of Edom and understanding out of Mount Esau. Even the wise men will not be able to help them; their wisdom and understanding will not avail. Teman is mentioned because it was known for its wise men; Eliphaz, who spoke so well to Job was a Temanite (Job iv:1). And the Prophet Jeremiah in his testimony against Edom wrote, "Is wisdom no more in Teman? Is counsel perished from the prudent? Is their wisdom vanished?" (Jer. xlix:7). But now their wise and valiant ones would be cut off by slaughter.

2. Edom's Sin Against Israel and the Day of the Lord: Verses 10-16. Her sin of violence against her brother Jacob comes now in special remembrance. On account of it shame would cover them and they would be cut off forever. When Jerusalem was in trouble and the Philistines and Arabs plundered the city (2 Chron. xxi:16-17), they stood on the other side and revolted (2 Chron. xxi:8-10). And more than that, they joined in plundering the city. Thus it was afterwards when the Babylonians came against Jerusalem, Edom rejoiced; they spoke proudly. Perhaps what is recorded in verses 12-14 happened repeatedly. They stretched out their hands for the possession of God's people. They placed themselves at the cross-roads to cut off the fugitives and delighted to deliver up into the hands of their enemies the remnant which was left.

All this will be repeated once more, when another great prophecy will be fulfilled and Jerusalem is once more surrounded by hostile nations (Zech. xiv:1-5). Not a few superficial Bible students thought when Jerusalem was captured during the war, and all looked bright for political Zionism, that the promises were now being fulfilled. There is coming another siege of Jerusalem, preceding the glorious appearing of the King of Israel, our Lord. That siege is prophetically described by Zechariah. Among those nations will be found Edom once more. Once more they will manifest their malice and hatred against Jerusalem.

Then, to show the link of connection between the future and the past, the Prophet announces the Day of the Lord. "For near is the day of Jehovah upon *all nations*." This day has not yet been. There have been judgments upon nations like Egypt, Babylon and others, nations which were nations of power and culture, which have fallen under the dealings of a righteous God; these judgments of the past did not bring that day which Obadiah announced, of which Joel after him so fully speaks. The Day of the Lord upon all nations is future. When it comes it will mean judgment for all nations, including Edom, Moab and others named in the Scriptures of Truth; and that day will be immediately followed by an age of blessing and glory such as the earth and the race had never known before. It will bring divine retribution. "As thou hast done will they do unto thee." The nations of the earth will have to drink of the cup of His fury and wrath.

3. The Kingdom and the Restoration of Israel: Verses 17-6, 21. The final section of Obadiah's brief prophecy concerns the kingdom, the victory over the enemies and the restoration of His people. Mount Zion will come into its own; there will be deliverance and there shall be holiness. What God had promised to the remnant of His people will be accomplished, and they will be a holy people and then hold their possessions, all that the Lord in His infinite grace had promised unto them. The house of Esau will be consumed, so that none shall be remaining of Esau, while Israel will occupy Edom's territory.

The Saviours mentioned in the last verse of this prophecy (or deliverers) must mean the chosen instruments which go forth to teach all nations and make known the glory of the King in their midst. For "the Kingdom shall be the Lord's."

JONAH

The Prophet Jonah

INTRODUCTION

The question as to the reality of the person of Jonah is answered by 2 Kings xiv:25. In this passage we find him mentioned as the Prophet who prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II. His name means "dove," and his father's name Amittai means "the Truth of the Lord." He was from "Gath-Hepher"—the winepress of the well is the meaning of these two words. Thus Jonah also belongs to the earlier Prophets and the book bearing his name, written by himself, occupies the right place in the Old Testament. A Jewish tradition states that Jonah was the son of the widow at Zarephath, whom Elijah raised to life; but this is only an invention with no evidence whatever.

THE BOOK AND EXPERIENCE OF JONAH

The Book of Jonah is of a different nature from the books of the other Minor Prophets; it is more like the history of Elijah and Elisha, these two great Prophets and their personal experiences and activities as reported in the historical books. The book of Jonah has no direct prophecies in it, yet the experience it records is a great prophecy.

We do not give the contents of the book in this introduction, but shall follow all in the annotations. As is well known, the miraculous history of the book of Jonah has been widely attacked by infidelity. When the Old Testament was translated into the Greek (the Septuagint) heathen philosophers and other writers ridiculed it and made sport with the book. Their objections and ridicule are reproduced in the school of the destructive criticism. We hear that men who boast of great scholarship declare that Jonah never lived, that the story of the book of Jonah is an imagination of some great literary genius. Says that arch-critic, Canon F. W. Farrar, in the Expositor's Bible: "Of Jonah we know nothing more. For it is impossible to see in the book of Jonah much more than a beautiful and edifying story, which may or may not rest on some surviving legends." But as some one has said, it requires less faith to credit this simple excerpt from Jonah's history than to believe the numerous hypotheses that have been invented to deprive it of its supernatural character. The great majority of these hypotheses are clumsy and far-fetched, doing violence to the language, and doing despite to the spirit of revelation. These infidel inventions are distinguished by tedious adjustment, laborious combinations, historical conjecture and critical jugglery.

Some critics who do not want to reject altogether the story of Jonah, suppose that it may have had some historical basis, though in

the form we have it today is fanciful and mythical. Another critic regards it as a dream Jonah had in the ship. Still another critic views the book as an historical allegory, descriptive of the fate of Manasseh, and Josiah his grandson. What wild fancy this critic indulged in may be seen from the fact that he compared the ship to the Jewish monarchy, while the casting away of Jonah symbolized the temporary captivity of Manasseh!

Many critics treat it as an allegory based upon the Phoenician myth of Hercules and the sea-monster. To quote a few more, simply to show what foolish things the darkened mind of man, who thinks he has attained scholarship, can invent in order to disprove the Truth of God, we mention the theory that when Jonah was thrown into the sea he was picked up by a ship having for a figurehead the head of a great fish. Another one says that probably Jonah took refuge in the interior of a dead whale which was floating about near the spot he was cast overboard.

The great majority of the critics today deny the historicity of the book of Jonah and claim that its material has been derived from popular legends, that it is fiction with a moral design. The moral lessons and its religious meaning have even a wider range than these hypotheses. The theories do not merit a special refutation.

IS IT HISTORY OR MYTH?

There is nothing in the account which would justify any critic to charge it with being allegory. It is cast in the form of a narrative and has all the literary characteristics of a personal experience. The sole reason why the critics have classed it with myths and deny its authenticity is the miraculous element in the book. Any one who believes in an omnipotent God, a God who does wondrous things, will have no difficulty whatever in accepting this book as a true history. We might also add that all the earlier Jewish sources confirm the historicity and literalness of the book of Jonah. Furthermore, the book is very simple and pure Hebrew.

THE HIGHEST EVIDENCE

The highest authority that Jonah lived, and had the experience recorded in this account is the Lord Jesus Christ. The words which He spoke, who is the Truth, are plain and unimpeachable. There can be no secondary meaning; "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, a greater than Jonah is here" (Matthew xii:40-41). Our Lord tells us that there was a

Prophet by the name of Jonah and that he had the experience related in the book which bears his name. To deny this is tantamount to denying the knowledge and the truthfulness of the Son of God. This is exactly what sneering critics do. They have even gone so far as to say that if our ever blessed Lord knew better than He spoke, He acted thus for expediency's sake, so as not to clash with the current opinions among His contemporaries. Others boldly say that He did not know, for He had not access to the sources which are at our command today. In other words the destructive critic claims to have more knowledge than the Lord Jesus Christ possessed in His days on earth.

Professor A. C. Zenos (in the Standard Bible Dictionary) says: "The New Testament does not commit Jesus Christ or its own authors to one or the other of the contending theories." This is a poor statement. The Lord Jesus did commit Himself fully to the historicity of Jonah. "The New Century Bible," a destructive work, makes the following declaration: "We are not to conclude that the literal validity of the history of Jonah is established by this reference"—that is, the words of our Lord in Matthew xii:40. But the man who wrote this overlooked the fact that the Lord in all His allusions to the Old Testament events always speaks of them as actual, literal events, and, therefore, establishes their literal validity. For instance, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness" . . . "As it was in the days of Noah" . . . "As it was in the days of Lot." Then in the next verse in Matthew's Gospel, the Lord speaks of the Queen of the South's visit to Solomon as a real, literal fact. Why then should He not have spoken of the history of Jonah as a literal fact?

The truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ placed such emphasis upon the book of Jonah because it foreshadowed His own experience as the Redeemer, and because He knew of what apostate Christendom would do with this book and its record. There is no middle ground possible; either this book of Jonah is true, relates the true and miraculous history of this Prophet, or the Lord Jesus Christ is not the infallible Son of God. His Person and His Work stand and fall together with the authenticity of Jonah.

"Our Lord singled out this particular miracle about Jonah, which has been thought of great difficulty, and affixes to it His own almighty stamp of truth. Can you not receive the words of the Lord Jesus Christ against all men that ever were? The Lord Jesus has referred to the fact that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish, call it what you will—I am not going to enter into a contest with naturalists, whether it was a shark, or a sperm-whale or another. This is a matter of very small account. We will leave these men of science to settle the kind (if they can); but the fact itself, the only one of importance to us to affirm, is that it was a great fish that swallowed and afterwards yielded up the Prophet alive. This is all one need to affirm—the literal truth of the fact alleged. There is no need to imagine that a fish was created for

that purpose. There are many fishes quite capable of swallowing a man whole. But the fact is not only affirmed in the Old Testament, but reaffirmed by our Lord Himself and applied to Himself. Any man who disputes this must give an account before the judgment seat of Christ" (W. Kelly).

THE TYPICAL-PROPHETIC MEANING OF JONAH

The typical-prophetic meaning of the story of Jonah is authorized by the words of the Son of God. His experience typifies the death, the burial and the resurrection of our Lord, as well as the Gospel message which goes forth to the Gentiles. Furthermore, Jonah's experience is prophetic also of the entire nation. The annotations will enter more fully into these interesting and important foreshadowings.

THE DIVISION OF THE BOOK

The division of the book is very simple. We maintain the chapter division as made in the authorized version.

Chapter i gives the record of Jonah's commission, his disobedience and the consequences. Chapter ii contains his prayer and his deliverance. Chapter iii has the account of his obedience in preaching to Nineveh. Chapter iv contains the account of Jonah's discontent and correction.

Analysis and Annotations

CHAPTER I

THE COMMISSION OF THE PROPHET: HIS DISOBEDIENCE AND THE CONSEQUENCES

1. The Commission. 1-2.
2. The Disobedience. 5.
3. The Consequences. 4-17.

1. The Commission: Verses 1-2. The record begins with the same word with which all historical books in the Bible begin, like Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, etc. The commission given to Jonah was to go to Nineveh, that great city, and to cry against it on account of its wickedness.

Nineveh was the great capital of the Assyrian nation; it is mentioned for the first time in Genesis x:11. Its great size is mentioned in Chapter iii:3, where we read it was "three day's journey." Ancient Greek and Roman writers state that it was the largest city in the world in that day. All these statements of its enormous size have been verified by modern excavations. The Word of the Lord came to Jonah to visit this city and deliver the message. Seven times the phrase "the Word of the Lord came to Jonah" is used in this book.

2. The Disobedience: Verse 3. Jonah rose up at once, but instead of going to the east towards Nineveh he fled in the other direction. Tarshish in Spain was his goal. It is also stated that he fled from the presence of the Lord. This cannot possibly mean that he fled from the presence of Him whom he knew as the omnipresent One. The Psalm of David which speaks of this expressly was then in the possession of Israel, and Jonah must have known it: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in sheol, behold, Thou art there. If I

take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Psalm cxxxix:7-10). He did not flee from the presence of the Lord in the sense of escaping His knowledge and authority. It means that he left the land of Israel where Jehovah dwelt; he fled from the service-commission he had received.

If we look for a motive of this disobedient prophet we find it given in the book itself. In chapter iv:2 we read, "Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, and slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of evil." But why should he fear that God might be merciful to Nineveh and save the city? It was undoubtedly a national spirit which possessed the prophet. It has been suggested that the prophet knew that the Assyrian would be used by the Lord as the instrument to punish Israel and that he thought if Nineveh would perish the people Israel might be saved. Inasmuch as God might show mercy to Assyria, Assyria would then be used as the rod upon Israel, and for this reason he was disobedient to the commission. But the direct prophecy that the Assyrian would be the staff in the hand of the Lord to bring judgment upon Israel was made through Isaiah (chapter x), and that revelation had not yet been given, for Jonah lived before the Prophet Isaiah. It was rather the fear Jonah had as a Jew that the conversion of the Gentiles might rob his nation of the distinction of being the nation of election, to whom Jehovah had revealed Himself exclusively. He therefore went to Joppa where he engaged passage on a ship which was to bring him to Tarshish, which he never reached. It was at Joppa where centuries later another Jew, who was also jealous for his nation, had a vision which made it clear that the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles. That Jew was Peter (Acts x).

3. The Consequences: Verses 4-17. No sooner had the ship set sail but a terrible tempest arose, sent by the Lord. The danger of shipwreck was imminent. The heathen mariners became terrified and besides crying each one to their

gods, they threw the wares overboard to lighten the ship, so that it might weather the storm. But we do not read anything about Jonah calling on his God. Was it an evil conscience which led him to seek sleep in the sides of the ship? Or did he seek sleep because he was in despair? Or was his action produced by the calmness of faith, that he knew himself in the hands of the Lord? Perhaps his action shows more than anything indifference and an astonishing self-security.

The shipmaster aroused him from his sleep, asking him why he slept and demanded that he call upon his God. The lot is cast and it fell upon Jonah. He might have confessed before but he waited as long as he could. The questions they asked him he answers readily. He confesses that he is a Hebrew, that he fears the Lord, the God of heaven, the creator of sea and land. His confession filled them with fear; they also knew that he had been disobedient for he told them about it. It was a noble confession and shows that though he had fled from the presence of the Lord that his heart still clung to Him. He answered the question, what shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? by pronouncing his own sentence. "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." Again we must say these are noble words. He is ready to sacrifice himself and trusts the Lord and His mercy. After the mariners made an unsuccessful attempt to row the ship to land, and calling upon the Lord not to lay upon them innocent blood, they cast Jonah into the raging sea, and the sea became calm. As a result the heathen sailors feared Jehovah exceedingly, offering a sacrifice unto Him and making vows, while the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, in whose belly Jonah remained three days and three nights. Some have stated that the Lord created a special sea-monster for this purpose, but the Hebrew word does not mean "create" it means "appoint." It certainly was not a whale, for whales rarely ever are seen in the Mediterranean sea, nor can a whale swallow a human being

on account of the narrowness of its throat. It was probably a species of sea-monster frequently found in that sea and known by the scientific name *squalus carcharias*, which can easily swallow a human being whole. But the miracle was not that such a fish came up from the depths of the sea and swallowed the prophet, but that Jonah was miraculously preserved in the fish.

THE TYPICAL APPLICATION

1. Jonah is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. As already pointed out in the introduction the words of our Lord sanction this application. But as He said when He spoke of Solomon "a greater than Solomon is here," so He also said "a greater than Jonah is here."

We point out a few of the applications and contrasts. Jonah was sent with a message of judgment; the Son of God came with the message of love and salvation. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John iii:17).

Jonah was disobedient, acting in self-will, fleeing from the presence of the Lord. The Son of God was obedient; He never did His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. The words He spoke were not His own. "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." He always had the Father set before Himself and was uninterruptedly in His presence.

Jonah, indifferent and self-secure, was fast asleep in the ship while the storm raged and the ship was in danger of going down. The Lord Jesus was asleep in the ship on Galilee, and though the ship was filling with water He was undisturbed, knowing that He was safe. He did what Jonah did not and could not do. He rebuked His fearful disciples and rebuked the wind and the waves; the storm was suddenly hushed.

Jonah bore a faithful witness; but how much greater is His witness. He is called "the faithful Witness" (Rev. i).

Jonah sacrificed himself in order to save those who were

about to perish. But how much greater His sacrifice! Jonah's fate came upon him on account of his sin and disobedience. The Lord Jesus Christ did not suffer for His sins, for He had none, being the Holy, the Sinless One. He died exclusively for others and died for the ungodly. But did Jonah actually die? Did death fasten upon him? Was his body miraculously preserved so that it did not see corruption? Was it a literal resurrection when the fish vomited him out? Jonah did not die physically. But his experience typifies the death and the burial of Christ, and also His physical resurrection. How could Jonah have prayed and cried to the Lord out of the belly of the fish if his physical life had ceased? It was a miracle, however, that Jonah was kept alive.

The three days and three nights have troubled a good many expositors. Not a few teach that in order to bring together the three days and three nights during which our Lord was in the grave, He must have died either on Wednesday or Thursday. The three days and three nights must be interpreted according to Hebrew usage. In Luke xxiv:21 we read that the two who met the risen Lord said, "and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done." That was on the first day of the week. Reckoning back, Saturday would be the second day and Friday the first day, the day on which Christ died.

2. Jonah is a type of the Jewish Nation. In the Jewish synagogical ritual the Book of Jonah is read on the Day of Atonement. The writer is indebted to an old orthodox Jew for the information why this story is read on their great day of fasting and prayer. He said, "We are the Jonah." Like Jonah the nation was called to bear witness to the Gentiles. And as Jonah did not want the knowledge of Jehovah to go to the Gentiles, so the Jews filled with national pride of being the elect nation opposed God's purposes. (See Acts xiii:6-12; 44-52; xiv:19-20; xvii:5-9; xviii:12, etc.)

Disobedient as Jonah, the nation left the presence of the Lord. Jonah engaged passage on a merchant-ship, and the Jew became a trafficker. Like as it was with Jonah, storm

and disaster came upon the nation after their great act of disobedience, when they rejected Christ, and opposed His purposes. Like Jonah, in the midst of all their troubles they did not deny, nor deny now, their nationality, their faith in God; they also confess in some of their prayers, at least the orthodox Jews, why it is that they are in trouble, that they have sinned and turned away from the Lord.

Jonah was cast overboard into the sea. The sea represents the nations; that is where the Jews were cast. As a result of the casting away of Jonah the heathen sailors turned to the Lord and sacrificed unto Him. In Romans xi:11 we read, "through their fall (the Jews) salvation came to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy." The belly of the fish represents the grave of the Jews among the nations. They became nationally and spiritually dead. But as the fish did not digest Jonah, so the nations have not digested the Jew. They remain unassimilated, just as Balaam predicted, "This nation shall dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations." The national preservation of Israel is one of the great miracles of history, just as the preservation of Jonah in the belly of the fish was a miracle.

CHAPTER II

JONAH'S PRAYER AND DELIVERANCE

1. The Prayer. 1-9.
2. The Deliverance. 10.

1. The Prayer: Verses 1-9. Some expositors have called attention to the fact that the prayer is not one offered up for deliverance, but it is a thanksgiving for the accomplished deliverance. But this is answered by the opening verse of this chapter, in which we are told that he prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly. When he found that he had escaped the death he anticipated and that the power of God kept him alive, he realized that the Lord his God would also deliver him; in faith he praised Jehovah for the coming deliverance. His prayer is composed almost entirely of sentences found in the Psalms. We give the references.

Verse 2 reminds of Psalms xviii:6, 7 and cxx:1. The word "hell" is the Hebrew "sheol," the unknown region. See also Psalm xxx:3. Verse 3 contains a quotation from Psalm xlii:7, "All thy waves and billows passed over me." In connection with verse 4 consider Psalm xxxi:22. Verse 5 is found in Psalm xviii:4, except the seaweed which crowned his head as he went into the deep; also Psalm lxix:2. The thanksgiving in verse 6, "Yet hast Thou brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God" is closely allied to Psalm xxx:3. The first part of verse 7 is from Psalm cxlii:3 (marginal reading) and cxliii:4. The second part is found in Psalm v:7 and xviii:6. The eighth verse reminds of Psalm xxxi:6 and the ninth verse is to be connected with Psalm xlii:4.

The last utterance before the Lord commanded the fish is a triumphant shout, "Salvation is of the Lord," a truth which many preachers in Christendom do not know.

2. The Deliverance: Verse 10. The God of creation manifested His power over His creation by impelling the fish to release its prisoner. The place at which the fish vomited out Jonah is not mentioned; it was probably not very far from the seaport Joppa where he embarked.

THE TYPICAL APPLICATION.

1. As to the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord went into the jaws of death and died the sinner's death, the substitute of sinners. Most of the passages from the Psalms which Jonah embodied in his prayer are prophetic predictions of the sufferings of Christ. He cried to God for deliverance and was heard. (See Hebrews v:7.) The answer was His resurrection. Over His blessed head passed the waves and billows of a Holy God, when as the substitute He hung on the cross. He knew more than Jonah could ever know what it meant, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid." The lxix Psalm is Messianic and the words Jonah used, "I sink in deep mire where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me," tell us of the deep sufferings

through which He passed. While Jonah's head was wound about with the seaweeds of the deep, our Lord bore the crown of thorns, the emblem of the curse, upon His blessed head.

It was on the third day that the fish vomited out Jonah. The third day is marked in the Word of God as the day of resurrection. (See Genesis i:11-13; Hosea vi:1-3.) On the third day our Lord left the grave behind and rose from among the dead. We quote a helpful paragraph on the question of the three days and nights: "So our Lord Jesus, though by Jewish reckoning three days and three nights in the grave, literally lay there but the whole of Saturday, the Sabbath, with the part of Friday not yet closed, and before the dawn of Sunday. For we must always remember in these questions the Jews' method of reckoning. Part of a day regularly counted for the twenty-four hours. The evening and the morning, or any part, counted as a whole day. But the Lord, as we know, was crucified in the afternoon on Friday; His body lay all the Sabbath day in the grave; and He arose early on the Sunday morning. That space was counted three days and three nights, according to sanctioned Biblical reckoning, which no man who bows to Scripture would contest. This was asserted among the Jews, who, fertile as they have been in excuses for unbelief, have never, as far as I am aware, made difficulties on this score. The ignorance of Gentiles has exposed some of them when unfriendly to cavil at the phrase. The Jews found not a few stumbling blocks, but this is not one of them; they may know little of what is infinitely more momentous; but they know their own Bible too well to press an objection which would tell against the Hebrew Scriptures quite as much as the Greek."*

2. As to the Nation. The prayer for deliverance and Jonah's deliverance by the power of God foreshadows the coming experience of the remnant of Israel. There is coming the time of Jacob's trouble in the closing years of this age. Then a part of the nation will call upon the Lord. Their

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*Kelly on Jonah.

prayers are also pre-written in the book of Psalms, and when finally they acknowledge that "Salvation is of the Lord," and He appears in His glory, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, the Lord will bring them out of their spiritual and national death. He will speak to the fish, the nations, and they will give up the Jews. Then comes the third day of their restoration. (See Hosea vi:1-3.)

CHAPTER III

JONAH PREACHING IN NINEVEH

1. The Repeated Commission and Jonah's Obedience. 1-4.
2. The Repentance and Salvation of Nineveh. 4-10.

1. The Repeated Commission and Jonah's Obedience: Verses 1-4. And now after Jonah's death and life experience the Word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, telling him to arise and go the Nineveh to preach there what the Lord would command him. And now he is obedient. Jonah arrived in the great city of three days' journey, and advancing a day's journey into it he cried out his message, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Following is the objection of Higher Criticism as to this statement: "If we were reading a historical description the narrative would be full of difficulties. A strange prophet announced the impending destruction as he traveled through the vast city for one day, and the huge population immediately believed and repented. The king, who is not named, heard, put on sackcloth, sitting in ashes. If this were history, Jonah did what no prophet, no apostle, what Christ Himself never did. Never did a day's preaching bring a vast strange city to repentance. But we repeat, it is not history, it is a story with a meaning, an allegory; it is the great announcement that God cares for the heathen world, and calls it to repentance, and whenever men anywhere repent, His compassion is kindled towards them" (New Century Bible). We reserve the answer to the supposed difficulties in this historical account for the typical unfolding of this event.

2. The Repentance and Salvation of Nineveh: Verses 4-10. The people of Nineveh believed God. The news that a strange prophet had appeared with the message of doom must have spread like wildfire and hundreds upon hundreds must have passed it on so that in a very short time it reached every nook and corner of the great city; it reached the palace of the king and the prisoners in the dungeon. That this is real history has been confirmed by archaeology. For just about that time Nineveh was in great trouble and facing a crisis, which made them eager to believe the message and return to God. They evidenced their faith by a universal fast and humiliation before God. The king laid aside his royal robe and humiliated himself as every one of his subjects did. He issued a proclamation to abstain from food and drink, in which the dumb creation was included. What a solemn time the great city had, when hundreds and thousands humbled themselves and when the lowing and groaning of the domestic animals was heard throughout the city. The people acknowledged all their wickedness and turned away from their evil ways and deeds of violence, expressing the hope of God's mercy. "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not." And God answered and was merciful to them.

THE TYPICAL APPLICATION

1. As to the Lord Jesus. Jonah who typifies in his experience the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord, preached the message as one who had been in a grave and came to life out of that grave. In Luke xi:29-30, 32, our Lord makes the application: "For as Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation . . . The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here." Christ was not preached as a Saviour to the Gentile world till He had died and risen from the dead. The Greeks who inquired after Him (John xii) received no answer. But the Lord spoke of Himself at that time as the

corn of wheat which was to die to bring forth the abundant fruit. Christ died for the sins of His people Israel, "for that nation," but He also died as a member of the nation, from which He came according to the flesh, so that He might rise and become the Saviour of the Gentiles. Christ preached as having died for our sins, buried and risen on the third day, is the true Gospel and carries with it the power of God in the salvation of sinners.

2. As to the Nation. The third day is the day of Israel's spiritual and national resurrection. When that day comes converted Israel will be, according to God's gifts and calling, a holy nation, a nation of priestly functions, a kingdom of priests. They are then fit to show forth the Lord and His glory, and to bring the message, not of judgment, but of life and glory, to the nations of heathendom. The statement in the New Century Bible quoted above is quite correct in one particular—that "Jonah did what no prophet, no apostle, what Christ Himself never did"—that never a day's preaching brought a vast strange city to repentance. And we might add that no preaching today, during this age, can ever bring such results. The case is unique; it never happened again, that a man who was disobedient, who turned against the divine commission, became a castaway, was miraculously preserved and delivered, led a great world city to God and to true repentance. But if we take into consideration the fact that this true history is a prophecy, all these invented higher critical difficulties vanish altogether. When the nation is reinstated in the land, filled with the Spirit, they will fulfill their calling and go forth in bringing the message to the nations of the world. Then Matthew xxviii:19 will be accomplished. Then and not before will the world be converted, and all the nations will be joined in the kingdom to Israel, His kingdom people.

And as for repenting Nineveh there came a day of joy and gladness, as animal creation in that city ceased its lowing and groaning, so will come the day of joy and gladness for this poor world, "in that day" when even groaning creation will be delivered of its groans and moans.

CHAPTER IV

JONAH'S DISCONTENT AND CORRECTION

1. Jonah's Discontent. 1-3.
2. The Correction. 4-11.

1. Jonah's Discontent: Verses 1-3. All that had happened displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was very angry. Did he feel that he had lost his prestige as a prophet, having announced the overthrow of Nineveh, when it did not happen? What he feared had come true; God had been merciful to this great city and they were now enjoying what he considered Israel's exclusive inheritance. Instead of rejoicing in the great exhibition of God's mercy towards such a wicked city, he was angry. Like Elijah, in the hour of despondency he requests to die. "Therefore, now, O Lord, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live." The trouble with Jonah was that he thought only of himself, and, as another has said, "the horrid selfishness of his heart hides from him the God of grace, faithful in His love for His helpless creatures."

2. The Correction: Verses 4-11. The Lord God who had been so merciful to Nineveh is now merciful to His angry servant the Prophet. "Doest thou well to be angry?" How great is the patience and kindness of the Lord, even towards them who fail! Jonah leaves the saved city evidently in disgust, and finds on the east side a place where he constructed a booth and sat there waiting to see what would become of the city. He evidently expected still an act of judgment. Then comes the lesson. The Lord God who had prepared a fish to swallow the disobedient prophet now prepared a gourd to provide shade for him. This gourd, a *quipayon*, is a very common plant in Palestine. The Creator whose creation is so wonderful, manifested the Creator's power in raising up this plant, for the relief of His servant, in a sudden manner. And Jonah was exceeding glad. Then God prepared a worm which destroyed the gourd. When the morning came and the sun beat upon the head of the prophet he fainted, and once more wished in himself to die. Alas! if the prophet had been in the right place before the

Lord he would have accepted the gourd as an evidence of His loving care, and when the worm destroyed the plant so that it withered he would have equally acknowledged his Creator-God and not have murmured. He might have said with Job, "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Jonah in his selfish impatience found fault with God. It is still the common thing amongst professing Christians.

And when God asked him, "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" the poor finite creature of the dust answered the Creator, "I do well to be angry, even unto death." Then comes the lesson. Not God, Elohim, the name of Him as Creator, speaks, but it is Jehovah, the Lord: "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left; and also much cattle?" If Jonah felt pity and was angry because of a small vine he had not planted nor made to grow, should not God with greater right have mercy upon His creatures, whom He created and sustained? Jonah is silenced; he could not reply. The last word belongs to Jehovah, who thus demonstrated that in His infinite compassion He embraces not Israel alone, but all His creation, the Gentile world and even animal creation.

"Most touching and beautiful is the last verse of the book, in which God displays the force and supreme necessity of His love; which (although the threatenings of His justice are heard, and must needs be heard and even executed if man continues in rebellion) abides in the repose of that perfect goodness which nothing can alter, and which seizes the opportunity of displaying itself, whenever man allows Him, so to speak, to bless him—the repose of an affection that nothing can escape, that observes everything, in order to act according to its own undisturbed nature—the repose of God Himself, essential to His perfection, on which depends all our blessing and all our peace."*

*Synopsis.

MICAH

The Prophet Micah

INTRODUCTION

When the Prophet Jeremiah was in danger of being put to death for his faithful testimony, certain of the elders rose up and said, "Micah the Morashtite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, King of Judah; and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest" (Jer. xxvi:18). This is the testimony of the Book of Jeremiah to Micah, who prophesied under the reign of Hezekiah, as well as Jotham and Ahaz. The first verse of the Book of Micah gives us this information. While Jonah was a Galilean, Micah was a Judean. He came from Moresheth-Gath, which distinguishes him from another prophet of the same name, Micah the son of Imlah (see 1 Kings xxii:8; Micaiah is the same as Micah). The name Micah means "who is like the Lord?"

Prophesying mostly in Jerusalem during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, he was contemporaneous with Isaiah. Though his name is not mentioned in the prophecy of Isaiah, his message is the same as the message of Isaiah, in describing the moral corruption of their times, and the Messianic prophecies. The following passages will confirm this: Micah i:9-16 and Isaiah x:28-32; Micah ii: 1-2 and Isaiah v:8; Micah ii:6, 11 and Isaiah xxx:10, 11; Micah ii:12 and Isaiah x:20-23; Micah iii:5-7 and Isaiah xxix:9-12; Micah iii:12 and Isaiah xxxii:14; Micah iv:1 and Isaiah ii:2; Micah iv:4 and Isaiah 1:19; Micah iv:7 and Isaiah ix:7; Micah iv:10 and Isaiah xxxix:6; Micah v:2-4 and Isaiah vii:14; Micah v:6 and Isaiah xiv:25; Micah vi:6-8 and Isaiah lviii:6-7; Micah vii:7 and Isaiah viii:17; Micah vii:12 and Isaiah xi:11. Thus the Lord gave the same witness through the mouth of these two. Of course Isaiah was the leading figure. But Micah did not copy him, but as the Holy Spirit came upon him he uttered his prophecies bearing witness to the same truths Isaiah had spoken. The style of Micah's writings is different from the style of Isaiah. "This may be all explained by the vivacity of his own individuality, and the excited state of his mind, passing as he does rapidly from threatening to promise, from one subject to another, and from one number and gender to another." But his words are never deficient in clearness, while in other respects he comes quite near to the style of Isaiah.

The prophetic horizon of Micah is very much restricted. The magnificent sweep of Isaiah, looking forward to the great and glorious consummation in the Kingdom, is lacking in Micah. The question of the exact time when Micah uttered his prophecies, what was spoken

during the reign of Jotham, during the reign of Ahaz or Hezekiah, is unessential, and we do not follow it in this introduction.

HIS MESSAGE

The Book consists of three great prophetic discourses which all begin in the same way, with the command to hear. "Hear all ye people," chapter i:2, the first discourse. The second discourse, chapter iii:1, "Hear, I pray you." The third discourse, chapter vi:1, "Hear ye now what the Lord saith." In the first prophetic message he predicts the destruction of Samaria, the ten-tribe kingdom, and the captivity of Judah. The second message is a message of reproof of the leaders of the nation, the heads of Jacob and the princes of the house of Israel, followed by a denunciation of the false prophets. This is followed by the vision of the coming glory in the last days and the restoration of Israel. In this second discourse the coming Ruler of Israel and His birthplace are announced; what He is and the Kingdom He will establish in the midst of His people. Here is the message of hope and glory.

The third discourse contains a very solemn pleading with His people. Jehovah tells them again of all His loving kindness. He tells them He has a controversy with them; He speaks to them of His rightful demands. It is a most eloquent outburst. The last part contains an assurance that the Lord will surely have compassion upon His people, while their enemies will be overthrown to lick the dust. One of the greatest words of praise in the Scriptures is found in the last three verses. It contains Israel's hope and is a prophecy of the time when the Redeemer shall return and turn away ungodliness from Jacob and remember their sins no more.

The three prophetic discourses of Micah the Morashtite give a progressive message. The Book begins with the threatening judgment; it leads on towards the Messianic salvation and glory, and finally the exhortation and reproof—to return unto Him, to repent, and the assurance of His compassion and forgiveness.

Analysis and Annotations

THE FIRST PROPHETIC MESSAGE

Chapter i-ii

CHAPTER I

1. The Introduction. 1.
2. Judgment Announced. 2-5.
3. The Destruction of Samaria. 6-7.
4. The Lamentation of the Prophet over the Coming Judgment. 8-16.

1. The Introduction: Verse 1. This introduction tells us two things. In the first place, we learn that this book contains the Word of the Lord that came to Micah, the Morashtite; in the second place, we are told when Micah exercised his office. As stated in the introduction, he was contemporary with Isaiah, probably for about twenty-nine years. Criticism has attacked the authorship of this book also. Since Criticism began, with Ewald, to question the unity of this little book, it has raged with increasing violence, until Professor Cheyne, improving on Robertson Smith in the Encyclopedia Britannica, concludes: "In no part of chapters iv-vii can we venture to detect the hand of Micah." There is no need to answer such statements. The unity of the Book of Micah is fully demonstrated by the message it contains. If chapters iv-vii were not written by Micah, will the critics gives us light on who the author is?

2. Judgment Announced: Verses 2-5. The opening message is sublime. It is an appeal to all the nations, the whole earth and all that is in it, to listen to the witness of the Lord Jehovah against them, the witness which comes from His holy temple. The other Micah (Micaiah, the same as Micah) the son of Imlah, uttered similar words (1 Kings xxii:28). He next describes the Lord coming out of His place, the place where He dwells in mercy, to come down and tread upon the high places of the earth. He is coming

to judge; He is coming in wrath. The nations are to hear it, that the judgment is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. On verse 4 see Psalm xviii:7-10; Psalm lxviii:8 and Judges v:4. The near fulfillment was the double judgment which came upon the two kingdoms, the kingdom of the ten tribes, Samaria, and the kingdom of Judah. But the description of the coming of the Lord in judgment also relates to that great future event, the day of the Lord.

3. The Destruction of Samaria: Verses 6-7. The sin of Israel was Samaria, it originated there and consisted of idol worship; the sins of Judah were the high places in Jerusalem (see Jer. xxxii:35). Complete destruction of Samaria would come with this announced judgment and all her graven images would be broken to pieces, and her whoredoms burned with fire (Joel ii:3; Hosea ii:7).

4. The Lamentation of the Prophet Over the Coming Judgment: Verses 8-16. Here is the lamentation of Micah as directed by the Spirit of God, not only over the fate of Samaria, but over Judah as well. He weeps for both Samaria and Judah. "I will wail and howl; I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals, and a mourning like the owls (ostriches)." It shows how these men of God entered in a whole-souled manner into the divine revelations they received. It created deep soul exercise. This must be the result of faith in the Prophetic Word with all His people at all times. In verse nine the prophet speaks of one who comes to execute the threatened judgment. "He is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem." This enemy is the Assyrian whom Micah beholds advancing and who came before the gates of Jerusalem (see Isa. x). The Assyrian was used in ending the kingdom of Israel; Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar was the instrument used against Judah and Jerusalem. Sennacherib came against Jerusalem, but it was Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who carried Israel away into captivity. Isaiah's prophecy enters more fully into this. He describes both the Assyrian and the Babylonian power. And both will appear again at the

close of the times of the Gentiles. The little horn of Daniel's prophecy in chapter vii, the head of the confederated nations, the revived Roman Empire, corresponds with the final King of Babylon, while the final Assyrian is the other little horn in Daniel viii (see annotations on Dan. vii and viii).

Verses 10-13 correspond to Isaiah x:28-34; it is a description of the advance of the Assyrian. The coming disaster is not to be published in Gath, that is, the Philistines are not to hear of it (see 2 Sam. i:20). There is a remarkable play of words in these statements. It may be literally rendered as follows: "Weep not in Weep-town; in Dust-town (the meaning of Aphrah) roll thyself in dust"; then a contrast, "in Beauty-town (Saphir means beauty) be in nakedness and shame; and in March-town (the meaning of Zaanan) march not forth."

The inhabitant of Maroth waited anxiously for good, but evil came from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem (Maroth means bitterness). In the Assyrian cylinder, known as Taylor's cylinder, Sennacherib mentions the great gate of Jerusalem.

Then follows a call to Lachish to escape. "Bind the chariot to the swift beast." Lachish was a fortified city, as the excavations have shown, and was taken by Sennacherib. Here is still another play of words in the original. Lachish means "Horse-town," so that it can be translated "Bind the chariot to the horse, O inhabitant of Horse-town." It has been suggested that the sin mentioned in connection with Lachish was that "the horses of the sun" in connection with idolatry were kept there (see 2 Kings xxiii:11).

In verse 14 the prophet mentions his home town Moresheth-gath; there is to be a parting gift for she shall go into captivity. And Achzib will not keep the invader back; Achzib means a lie—the "Lie-town" shall be a lie to the kings of Israel, a false hope.

The heir who is to possess Mareshah is the Assyrian, and "the glory of Israel shall come even unto Adullam," the

nobles of Israel shall gather in the cave of Adullam, like outcasts (see 1 Sam. xxii:1).

They were now to mourn, expressed in making themselves bald (Job i:20; Isa. xv:2, xxii:12; Jer. xvi:6), for they are gone into captivity.

CHAPTER II

1. The Guilt and Punishment of Israel. 1-11.
2. The Future Restoration. 12-13.

1. The Guilt and Punishment of Israel: Verses 1-11. In the first two verses the special sins of Israel are mentioned, the same as in Amos—idolatry, covetousness and oppression. Therefore punishment is to fall upon them. There would be a doleful lamentation: "We be utterly spoiled: he changeth the portion of my people; how does he take it away from me!" Their fields would be divided. Nor did they listen to the true prophets; they gave ear to the false prophets who flattered them. It is interesting to note that the sentence, "Prophesy ye not, thus they prophesy," literally translated is, "Do not sputter, thus they sputter." They did not give out the real message, but they sputtered out their own words. These false prophets tried to prevent the true prophets from announcing the judgment of the Lord.

Then comes a passionate appeal: "O, thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Are these His doings? Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" He still appeals to their consciences. The Spirit of God does not change, nor was it His doings, when the nation drifted into idolatry and judgment was impending. Still, if they but walked uprightly His words would surely do them good. But they had risen as an enemy against Him; and yet the Lord, in spite of all, called them "My people."

2. The Future Restoration: Verses 12-13. In this prophecy Christ is announced as the Breaker, the One who goes before them, clears the way, and removes every obstacle out of the way. In verse 10 we read, "Arise ye, and depart;

for this is not your rest." The true rest for His people Israel comes when the King comes and brings with Him the promised blessing and glory. Then the remnant of Israel will be gathered, "and their king shall pass before them, and the Lord at the head of them.". It is a great prophecy of the ultimate restoration of Israel. "We must not exclude all allusion to the deliverance of the Jewish nation out of the earthly Babylon by Cyrus; at the same time, it is only in its typical significance that this comes into consideration at all, namely, as a preliminary stage and pledge of the redemption to be effected by Christ."

THE SECOND PROPHETIC MESSAGE

Chapters iii-v.

CHAPTER III

1. Address to the Godless Princes and Judges. 1-4.
2. Address to the False Prophets. 5-8.
3. The Verdict of Judgment. 9-12.

1. Address to the Godless Princes and Judges: Verses 1-4. The second prophetic message of Micah contains the great Messianic prophecies. But first the prophet gives a description of the degradation of the nation, the moral corruption of the leaders and judges, as well as the false prophets. It is all summed up in one sentence, "who hate the good, and love the evil." The princes and judges robbed the people, treated them like cattle (verse 3). For these unjust deeds the Lord would not hear them when they cried in the hour of their need, and would hide His face from them.

2. Address to the False Prophets: Verses 5-8. The false prophets were mostly responsible for these abominations, just as today the false in Christendom, the deniers of the faith, destructive critics and others, are responsible for the conditions in the professing Church. They make the people err. While they bite with their teeth, that is, being fed, they cried "Peace" to their patrons; and those who did not support them, by putting food in their mouths, they fought and

denounced. There would be night for them, with no vision; darkness would come upon them. They would be ashamed and confounded; the covering of the lips was a sign and emblem of mourning and silence. Such will be the fate of all false prophets and teachers.

The eighth verse is a magnificent outburst of God's true prophet, Micah's confession. As the true prophet he was full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and thus filled he declared unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.

3. The Verdict of Judgment: Verses 9-12. What Micah had announced in the preceding verse he does now. He tells the heads and rulers that they build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. He speaks of the influence of money. Judges acted for reward, priests taught for hire, and prophets prophesied for money. The verdict of judgment is mentioned in Jer. xxvi:18. This prophecy was fulfilled when Babylon conquered Jerusalem. And when finally the returned remnant rejected the Lord of Glory, their King, Zion and Jerusalem became once more heaps, as he announced, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

CHAPTER IV

1. The Future of Glory. 1-5.
2. The Restoration and the Final Victory. 6-13.

1. The Future of Glory: Verses 1-5. The last verse predicted the long desolation and ruin of Zion. This is followed at once by a great prophecy of the future of glory in store for Zion. Isaiah also uttered this great prediction. Not that Micah copied Isaiah, nor Isaiah Micah, but the same Spirit gave to the men the same prophecy. It concerns the latter days, which means the coming of Messiah's kingdom on earth. These days are not yet here. To apply these words, even in a spiritual way, to the present age, or to the Church, is a serious mistake. The house of the Lord is not the Church, but the house in Jerusalem, to which in the kingdom the nations will come to worship the Lord of hosts.

The nation will be judged and rebuked by Him whose glorious throne will be established in Jerusalem. Then, and only then, comes the time of universal, world-wide peace. How blind Christendom is in not seeing in what connection the favoured text concerning peace on earth stands! It will be "in that day" when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." The prediction of our Lord that throughout this age, down to its end, nation would lift up sword against nation, is then ended, and another order of things begins; for then "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." What peace and prosperity will then follow! It is described in the fourth verse, "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

2. The Restoration and the Final Victory: Verses 6-13. The regathering of all Israel then takes place. Not the boasting, proud, infidel, portion of the nation as it is today. Reform-Judaism and the other apostates in the nation will suffer judgment in the future as they did in the past. But there is a feeble, God-fearing remnant, and to that remnant belong the promises. "In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted." In His grace He will make the remnant a strong nation and reign over them in the established kingdom. To Zion shall return "the first dominion," that is, the reign and power and glory that was manifested in the monarchy under David and Solomon; only it will be greater than David's or Solomon's kingdom.

All this is preceded by her sorrow and captivity. It must be noticed that verse 10 goes beyond the Babylonian captivity, for it could not be said that the Lord redeemed in that past captivity Israel from the hands of her enemies. Nor was it true then that many nations were gathered against her. The Babylonian captivity is a type of the greater dispersion throughout this present age. When it ends, as it will end, the Lord will then redeem His people and deal in judgment with the opposing nations which finally gather

against Jerusalem. (See the annotations of the last chapters of Zechariah.) He gathers the nations for the harvest time, when the sheaves are to be threshed. The daughter of Zion is to trample on them and beat them, and the grain, the riches of the Gentiles, will be consecrated unto the Lord. In connection with verses 11-13 the following Scriptures should be read and studied with the annotations: Joel iii; Ezekiel xxxviii; Zechariah xii.

CHAPTER V

1. The Siege and the Smitten Judge. 1.
2. The Smitten Judge: Who he is. 2.
3. The Events of the Future. 3.
4. The Rejected One, The Shepherd of Israel. 4-6.
5. The Remnant of Jacob and The Kingdom. 7-15.

1. The Siege and the Smitten Judge: Verse 1. This interesting chapter presents difficulties, but they all vanish if we view all in the light of the future as revealed in the prophetic Word. Here it is necessary to divide the Word of Truth rightly, or we shall never find our way through this great Messianic chapter. The daughter of troops gathers herself in troops to besiege Jerusalem. It is the Assyrian army gathering before the city. But it is not the Assyrian of the past, whose invasion both Isaiah and Micah describe prophetically, but it is the Assyrian of the future, the great troubler which invades the land of Israel at the end-time, the time of Jacob's trouble, the great time of travail and final deliverance. This last invader, the King of the North (see Joel ii) besieges Jerusalem. And the reason of it all, their long history of trouble, culminating in the great tribulation, is the rejection of the judge of Israel. It is the Messiah, our Lord. They despised Him, insulted Him, smote Him with a rod upon the cheek. He is called the Judge of Israel, because the judge held the highest official position in Israel; the King of Israel held this office. The smiting upon the cheek was considered the greatest disgrace; thus Zedekiah smote the prophet Micaiah upon the cheek and asked him, "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from

me to speak to thee?" (see 1 Kings xxii:24 and Matt. xxvi: 67, 68). In Job xvi:10 we read Job's complaint, "They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me reproachfully upon the cheek; they have gathered themselves together against me."

2. The Smitten Judge, who He is: Verse 2. This great verse is a parenthetical statement, giving a description of the Judge of Israel. It shows forth Him who is to be the Ruler and the Judge, the Redeemer and the King. It is the passage which the chief priests and the scribes quoted to wicked Herod, when he demanded to know where Christ should be born (Matt. ii:4-6). This great prophecy was therefore known when our Lord was born to predict the birth of the Messiah, in fact, the Jews always believed this. But after He was born and lived among them and was rejected by them they attempted deliberately to explain it away, and invented fables to accomplish this. It was Tertullian, and other prominent teachers of the early Church, who argued with the Jews, that if Jesus was not the promised Messiah, the prophecy given by Micah could never be fulfilled, for none of David's descendants was left in Bethlehem.

But here is more than an announcement of the birthplace of Christ. We have a wonderful description of His Person. He is to be the Son of David, coming out of David's city, destined to be the Ruler in Israel. But He is more than a descendant of David, "His goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." Even this plain announcement has not been left unattacked by the infidel critics. Dr. R. F. Horton in his comment on this passage says the following: "We are not called on to explain away this wonderful and solemn forecast, especially when we have seen it in the Babe of Bethlehem, who came into the world out of the bosom of the Father. Micah could not understand his own deep saying; but how foolish of us to discredit it when history has made its meaning plain."

Here we have His Deity fully revealed as well as His humanity; He is the God-Man. In this passage Micah's testimony harmonizes with Isaiah's in chapter ix:6, 7.

3. The Events of the Future: Verse 3. The meaning of this verse becomes plain if we connect it with the first verse and treat the second verse as a parenthesis. They smote the Judge of Israel upon the cheek, they rejected the Lord of Glory, and as a result God gave them up. "Therefore will He give them up, until the time when she that travaileth hath brought forth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel." It is often applied to the birth of Christ and connected with Revelation xii, the birth of the man-child. There can be no question that the man-child in the chapter of Revelation is Christ, and the woman described is Israel; but its exegetical meaning is in connection with the last days, when Israel will be in travail pains to give birth to the remnant, so prominently mentioned in prophecy. Since the nation rejected the Messiah they have had nothing but suffering, but the great travail pains come in the future. "For thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it, it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it (Jer. xxx:5-7). That godly remnant turning then to the Lord, born in that future travail, are called here "His brethren." They are the same of which our Lord spoke in the description of the judgment of nations, which He executes when sitting upon the throne of His glory (see Matt. xxv:31). That remnant will resume their place as and with Israel, not becoming a part of the true Church, which is then no longer upon the earth, but having all the earthly Jewish hopes realized in the kingdom, of which they are the nucleus.

4. The Rejected One, the Shepherd of Israel: Verses 4-6. This refers to His second coming. He will stand and feed in the strength of Jehovah, for He is the Lord; and they (saved Israel) shall abide. Yea, more than that, "He shall be great unto the ends of the earth."

How beautiful is the opening sentence of the fifth verse! "This Man shall be peace (or our peace)." Of Him Isaiah spoke, too, as "the Prince of Peace," and that "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." David in his great prophetic psalm (lxxii:7) concerning these coming days speaks of "abundance of peace." Zechariah likewise in predicting the future says, "He shall speak peace to the nations" (Zech. ix:10). He made peace in the blood of His Cross and for all who trust in Him He is peace, "for He is our Peace."

Here it concerns the peace He has and gives to His restored people Israel. He will be the peace for them, when the Assyrian, the King of the North, enters their land, and by His power will strike down the invader. Who are the seven shepherds and the eight principal men? They will be those who will be used in that day to stem back the invading hosts. Who they are is unknown, but it will be known at the time of fulfillment. Then Assyria, the land of Nimrod, as well as all opposing world powers will be completely ended.

5. The Remnant of Jacob and the Kingdom: Verses 7-15. The restored and blessed remnant of Jacob will possess a double character. They will be used in blessing and refreshing among the nations, "as dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass." On the other hand, they will be in the midst of many people as a lion and as a young lion, to avenge unrighteousness and opposition, All the adversaries and enemies of Israel will be cut down and cut off (Num. xxiv:9; see exposition of Balaam's parables at the close of annotations on Numbers.) All the instruments of war will be done away with, as well as witchcrafts and the soothsayers. Spiritism, Christian Science, Theosophy and all the other demon cults flourishing now, and still more before He comes, will find their ignominous end. Idolatry, the graven images, and the standing images will be abolished. Before the Lord comes the evil spirit of idolatry will once more seize hold on Israel, that is, among the apostates (see annotations on Matt. xii:43-45). While all this

refers to Israel it also includes the rest of the world. All offences will be gathered out of His kingdom. The better rendering of verse 15 is, "And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the nations which hearkened not." That is, during the end of the age God sent forth a testimony to the nations and those who hearkened not will fall under the wrath of the lion of the tribe of Judah.

THE THIRD PROPHETIC DISCOURSE

Chapters vi-vii

CHAPTER VI

1. The Words of Jehovah to His People. 1-5.
2. Israel's Answer. 6-7.
3. The Moral Demands of Jehovah. 8.
4. The Lord Must Judge Them. 9-16.

1. The Words of Jehovah to His People: Verses 1-5. This chapter is cast in the form of a controversy. The utterance has been called by some the most important in the prophetic literature. It is hardly this, nor is, as critics claim, the eighth verse a definition of religion, "the greatest saying in the Old Testament."

The beginning is sublime, "Hear ye now what Jehovah saith!" The Prophet is to arise and contend before the mountains so that the hills may hear his voice. The mountains and the enduring foundations of the earth are to hear the controversy the Lord has with His people and how He pleads with Israel.

Then follows the tender loving pleading of Jehovah, who still loves His people, in spite of their wickedness, "O my people, what have I done to thee?" What matchless condescension! The Lord whom they had rejected, from whom they had turned away, does not denounce them for their sins, nor does He enumerate them, but He asks whether He had been at fault. Had He done anything amiss towards them? Had He wearied His people? He is willing that they should testify against Him. Had He done anything that they should get tired of Him? We may imagine a pause here, as if He were waiting for an answer. But there is no answer.

He continues to speak. He had brought them out of Egypt, redeemed them out of the house of bondage; He had given them Moses, Aaron and Miriam, by whom He led them. He reminded them of Balak, King of Moab, and Balaam, the son of Beor, who wanted to have Israel cursed. But what had Balaam been forced to say? "How shall I curse whom God has not cursed!" What a faithful, loving God He had been to them.

2. Israel's Answer: Verses 6-7. Here the people speak, but it is significant that they do not address the Lord, who had spoken to them by the prophet. They knew themselves guilty and condemned. So they address the prophet and ask what to do. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" For generations they had brought burnt offerings, thousands of rams and rivers of oil. But it was nothing but an outward worship; inwardly they remained the same. But they were willing to do more in this outward service, even to the sacrifice of the firstborn. Isaiah 1:10-18 is an interesting commentary to these questions, showing how the Lord despised these ceremonies of a people who were evil doers and corrupters (see also Psalm 1:7-23).

3. The Moral Demands of Jehovah: Verse 8. The prophet gives the answer of Jehovah. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Where has God made the demand? In the Law. There is no more deadly error than to hold up this verse as the essence of the Gospel and the one true, saving religion. Yet this we hear today on all sides. But the most loud-mouthed advocates of this "saving religion" practise what the Lord demands the least. And there is a good reason for it. Israel did not act in righteousness, nor did they love mercy, nor did they walk

humbly in fellowship with the Lord. Why not? Because they were uncircumcised in their hearts. To do right, to love mercy, to walk in humility with God is impossible for the natural man; in order to do this there must be the new birth, and the new birth takes place when the sinner believes and expresses his faith in true repentance. Only a blind leader of the blind can say this verse is the Gospel, and that faith in the Deity of Christ and in His atoning, ever blessed work on the Cross is not needed. Israel never has been anything like this which Jehovah demands. The day is coming when the Lord in His grace will give them a new heart and take away the stony heart, and fill them with His Spirit (see Ezek. xxxvi).

4. The Lord Must Judge Them: Verses 9-16. The Lord speaks again and puts before them once more their moral degeneration. Wicked balances, deceitful weights, the deeds of unrighteousness. They were destitute of mercy, for they were full of violence, lies and deceit. Therefore judgment must now fall upon them.

CHAPTER VII

1. The Prophet's Complaint. 1-6.
2. Confession, Prayer, and Thanksgiving. 7-20.

1. The Prophet's Complaint: Verses 1-6. Is is the prophet's voice complaining over the conditions of the people. But he is also the typical representative of the remnant during the time of travail in Zion. It is to be noted that our Lord quotes from this portion of Micah. (See Matt. x:21, which dispensationally applies to the future remnant.) In the midst of the conditions the prophet describes we read that his refuge was prayer, looking to the Lord with the assurance that He will hear. "Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me." This will be the attitude of the godly Israelites during the time of trouble.

2. The Conclusion: Verses 7-20. It is Israel speaking in the remnant, represented by the prophet. The enemy is addressed; at the time of Micah it was the Assyrian, the

type of the end Assyrian; but it includes all the world powers in their anti-Semitic attitude. The real Israel has always had this comfort, founded on the fact that God's gifts and calling are without repentance, that they are the elect nation, that their fall must be followed by a spiritual and national resurrection (Rom. xi). Hence they say, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall rise again; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me." This will be the case when their greatest darkness comes in the end of the age (see Isa. lx).

It is a willing submission to the chastisement of the Lord expressed in verse 9; they acknowledge theirs sins and once more declare, "He will bring me forth to light, and I shall behold his righteousness."

This is followed by a prophetic declaration. The day is coming when her walls will be built again, and in that day shall the decree be far removed. The latter statement may mean the same which the Prophet Jeremiah reveals in chapter xxxi:31 to the end of the chapter. The old decree, or law, will end, and there will be the new covenant into which Judah and Israel enter "in that day." Then the nations will gather to restored Israel in the kingdom (compare verse 12 with Isa. lx:3-10).

In the meantime the land will be desolate, as it is now, the fruit of their evil doings, till the day comes when the wilderness will be a fruitful field (Isa. xxxii:16) when the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose (Isa. xxxv:1).

Once more the prophet's voice is heard in supplication. The prayer in verse 14 is answered by the Lord in verses 15-17. The Lord will show again in that day the marvelous things as He did in their past redemption out of Egypt. The nations, their enemies, will be witness to it; they will be humiliated in the dust.

The three concluding verses belong to the greatest in the Old Testament Scriptures. Here we listen to a great praise and outburst of adoration. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger

forever, because He delighted in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou will perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."

Such will be the future praise of the remnant of His heritage, when the Deliverer comes to Zion and turns away ungodliness from Jacob, when the covenant with them will be consummated and their sins will be taken away (Rom. xi:26, 27). Once a year orthodox Jews go to a running stream and scatter into it bits of paper and small articles, repeating while they do it these three verses (the so-called Tashlik ceremony). It is but an outward act, yet testifying that there is still faith in Israel. It will be a glorious day when God forgives them their sins and remembers them no more.

NAHUM

The Prophet Nahum

INTRODUCTION

Nahum's history is unknown. All we know of him is that he was an Elkoshite. His name means "Comforter." Some have identified Elkosh with a village of similar name which is in existence today, not far from the site of ancient Nineveh, on the eastern banks of the Tigris. There the grave of Nahum is shown, adored alike by nominal Christians and the followers of Mohammed. But careful research has shown this to be absolutely without any foundation whatever. No one knew anything about that grave till about the sixteenth century of our era. It is the Elkosh which existed in Galilee and which is still known as a little village. Nahum, like Jonah, was a Galilean.

THE DATE OF NAHUM

The opening verse does not give a hint as to the time Nahum lived and prophesied. Critics, on account of some Assyrian expressions found in the book have put the date later. From internal evidences we can ascertain the date without difficulty. Judah and not Israel is addressed by Nahum. There is no reason to assume that he lived in exile and uttered his prophecy in the land of Assyria. He spoke in the land of Israel, probably in Jerusalem. The most significant passage which gives us important information is chapter i:11: "There is one come out of thee (out of Assyria) that imagineth evil against the Lord, a wicked counsellor." Who was this wicked counsellor, who imagined evil against the Lord? There can be but one answer. A wicked counsellor came out of Assyria, the mouthpiece of its reigning king Sennacherib. His name was Rab-shakeh. He blasphemed and defied the God of Israel. His vile words are recorded in 2 Kings xviii:26-27. The description of Nahum fits this Assyrian villain. We are justified in placing Nahum in the period of Hezekiah; he was therefore contemporary with Isaiah and Micah.

There is an interesting link between Jonah, Micah and Nahum. Jonah, was sent with the message to Nineveh about one hundred and fifty years before Nahum prophesied. Through his message Nineveh turned to the Lord. Isaiah and Micah prophesied concerning the same Assyrian power, the capital of which was Nineveh. They witnessed the Assyrian attack upon Jerusalem and Jehovah's intervention in behalf of His people. They saw the downfall of the kingdom of Israel through Assyria and were well acquainted with the wickedness of the Assyrian. And then came Nahum from Galilee, and the Spirit of God gave through him the great message of the coming complete destruction of Nineveh.

ASSYRIAN HISTORY

A knowledge of Assyrian history, and its great capital, Nineveh, is needed for a better understanding of Nahum's prophecy. It is strange that ancient writers like Ctesias, the physician of Artaxerxes, Mnemon, and Diodorus Siculus have but little to say about Assyria, and many identified Assyria with Babylonia. The infidel critics have seen their defeat in this respect. Not believing the Bible, they trusted in the historical accounts of pagan writers, and assuming that they were right discredited the Word of God, only to find out afterward that the Bible is right and the heathen historians were wrong. For instance, Isaiah mentions in chapter xx Sargon, king of Assyria. Because the secular historians know nothing of such a king, they sat in judgment upon the Word of God. They denied that such a king ever existed, thinking that the statement by Isaiah is an invention. But when Khorsabad was excavated the annals of Sargon, King of Assyria, were found engraved on the walls of the palace. It was then proven that Sargon was a great warrior, the father of Sennacherib, and that Isaiah gave a true record.

Hezekiah, the king of Judah, under whom Nahum as well as Isaiah and Micah prophesied, had paid tribute for many years to Assyria. When he revolted an Assyrian army appeared in the land, by which over forty Judean cities were captured. Jerusalem itself was saved by divine intervention (see Isa. xxxvii:36). Sennacherib, who had sent the expedition against Jerusalem,being murdered by his own sons in 681 B.C. (see Isa. xxxvii:38). His successor was Esarhaddon, who besieged Sidon and carried its treasures to Nineveh. Asshurbanipal succeeded him to the throne and made his son Shamash-shumukin regent of Babylon, for Babylon was then an insignificant power. Here we must remember that when Babylon was next to nothing in world history, Isaiah had predicted its coming greatness and conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonian power. Under Asshurbanipal the ancient and great capital of Upper Egypt was captured, which is mentioned by Nahum in chapter iii:10; that is, No-Amon is Thebes. Asshurbanipal conquered many countries and nations; he razed Susa, and immense treasures were carried off to Nineveh. During his reign every year saw a cruel war, and ruin and carnage was spread in every direction. The captives were treated in a horrible manner, with all kinds of torture. The nations suffered terribly under this wicked monarch, so that when finally Assyria fell the nations rejoiced, as mentioned by Nahum at the conclusion of his prophecy. "All that hear the bruit of thee shall clap hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" After Asshurbanipal Assyria declined. He was followed by Asshur-etil-ilani and Sin-shar-ishkun, and finally Assyria and its great and proud capital were conquered by Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyaxares. This happened about 625 B.C., just about ninety years after Nahum announced the destruction of Nineveh.

THE MESSAGE OF NAHUM

His prophetic message concerns exclusively Nineveh. Critics have put question marks over against certain parts of this book, while other critics have contradicted their fellow critics. In fact, if one wishes to find theories and assumptions, wild guesses and fanciful hypotheses, the camp of the rationalist is the place. The unity and integrity of the prophecy of Nahum is beyond controversy. As the opening verse announces, it is the burden of Nineveh.

Typically Nineveh stands for the world powers to the end of the times of the Gentiles, and its overthrow foreshadows the overthrow of the final world powers.

THE DIVISION OF NAHUM

The three chapters of which Nahum is composed give us the correct division of his prophecy. In the first chapter we find the purpose of God in dealing in judgment with the oppressor of Israel. The second chapter describes the overthrow, the plundering, and destruction of Nineveh. The third chapter shows the guilt and the well deserved judgment and ruin of Nineveh.

Analysis and Annotations

THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN DEALING WITH THE ASSYRIAN OPPRESSOR

CHAPTER I

1. The Superscription. 1.
2. Jehovah's Majesty in Judgment. 2-6.
3. His People Comforted and Assured. 7-13.
4. The Judgment of Assyria and the Result. 14-15.

1. The Superscription: Verse 1. The burden of Nineveh; it means that there is to follow a weighty prophetic oracle concerning the great world city of Nineveh, whose dimensions are given by Jonah, which have been confirmed by the excavations. The next sentence gives us the definite information that what follows in the book is the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

2. Jehovah's Majesty in Judgment: Verses 2-6. It is a sublime description. God is a jealous God. The jealousy of God has for its source the love for His elect people (see Zech. i). "For thou shalt worship no other god; for the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God." He is jealous over His people lest they serve other gods. And because He is a jealous God, a holy, a sin-hating God, He must be an avenger of what is against His character. He will take vengeance on His adversaries and reserveth wrath for His enemies. Destructive criticism has invented an infidel theory as if the God of wrath and vengeance were the product of the mind of man, and that Jehovah is some tribal deity, corresponding to the tribal gods of the surrounding heathen nations. Thus criticism rejects the Jehovah of the Bible and invents its own god, rejecting the threatenings of coming wrath and judgment as taught in the Old Testament and in the New in connection with the Coming of the Lord, branding these revelations the result of the false apocalyptic teachings of the Jews. God is the God

of Love, as much as He is the God of Wrath. He must be that or He would not be the God of Light and Holiness. He cannot afford to let evil go on forever. He is the Lord slow to anger. His patience is great, but He will not acquit the guilty, who continue in sin and do evil. Verses 2 and 3 describe His righteous government. Then follows a beautiful poetic description of His majesty, a description suited to the finite mind of man.

> In whirlwind and storm is His way,
> And clouds are the dust of His feet.
> He rebuketh the sea and drieth it up
> And empties all the rivers.
> Carmel, Bashan, and Lebanon are thinned out,
> And the Flower of Lebanon languisheth.
> Mountains quake before Him
> And all the hills melt away;
> And the earth is consumed in His presence,
> The world and all that dwell therein.
> Before His indignation who can stand?
> And who can abide His fierce anger?
> His fury is poured out like fire,
> And the rocks are thrown down by Him."

What to the mind of man is more imposing than the towering storm-clouds, and what more terrifying than the onrushing whirlwind, which lays low the forest? Man, the creature of the dust, steps upon the dust of the earth, to which man returns in the hour of death. But Jehovah has the clouds as the dust of His feet. If He arises in His righteous wrath all will be swept before Him, and the mountains, symbolical of the kingdoms of the earth, will quake before Him, and the pride of man will be humbled in the dust (see Isa. ii).

3. His People Comforted and Assured: Verses 7-13. While in the foregoing section He speaks of His own character in dealing with evil, He now gives comfort and assurance to those who trust in Him, that is, to His people. He knoweth them, the comfort all His people have at all times, the Lord knoweth them that are His, and as our Lord said, "I know my sheep." For such the Lord is good and a stronghold

in the day of trouble. But His enemies will feel His wrath. "But with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof (Nineveh) and darkness will pursue His enemies."

In the prophetic application we must look beyond the horizon of Nahum's time and the judgment of Nineveh. The day of the Lord brings the final overthrow of the proud world powers, and the remnant of His people will have in the Lord a refuge, while the judgment floods sweep over the earth (see Psa. xlvi).

On the ninth verse many expositors have erred in their interpretation. It is also addressed to Israel. "What do ye imagine against the Lord?" Do you imagine that the Lord is not going to do it? Will He repent of His judgment purpose? No! He who has spoken "will make an utter end," and to His people it is spoken "affliction shall not rise up the second time."

Then a description of the Assyrian in verse 10. They are entangled like thorns, so that they will find no escape when the judgment overtakes them, while they are drunk with wine in their carousings. Like the dry stubble are they to be devoured. Rab-shakeh, as mentioned in our introduction, is the one who came out of Assyria against Jerusalem with evil imaginations. The better translation of verse 12 is, "Though they be strong, and likewise many, even so shall they be cut down, and he (the Assyrian) shall pass away."

The second half of the twelfth verse concerns His people. "Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more." One can see at once that the "no more" demands a future fulfillment. For, while it is true, the Assyrian did no longer afflict Israel, yet affliction upon affliction has been their lot. But there comes the day when all afflictions will cease. "For now will I break his yoke (the yoke of the Assyrian) from off thee (Israel) and I will burst thy bonds asunder."

4. The Judgment of the Assyrian and the Result: Verses 14-15. The fourteenth verse gives the judgment commandment as to Assyria and Nineveh. They are vile, and the

God who declared His character in the beginning of this message, is going to act accordingly.

The result is stated in the last verse of this chapter. "Behold, upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows; for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off." The prophet beholds how the messengers rush over the mountains with the good news. Judah and Jerusalem are delivered. Peace has come. Praise and thanksgiving is heard in Zion.

We must not overlook the similar passage in Isaiah lii:7. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! . . . Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth have see the salvation of our God." This was spoken in connection with Babylon's overthrow, but its wider application and meaning is future. The overthrow of Babylon and Nineveh did not result in the glorious things spoken of by Isaiah and Nahum. Not then did the ends of the earth see the salvation of God, nor was Jerusalem redeemed, nor God as King enthroned in Zion. It is all yet to come. When that day comes, the messengers will go forth from Jerusalem and declare the good tidings to the nations of the world. The good news of the kingdom will be heralded far and wide, in the beginning of the millennium, and then the abiding, abundant peace has come, so that all the nations see the salvation of the God of Israel. The wicked, opposing powers of the world will then be no more.

THE OVERTHROW, PLUNDERING, AND DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH

CHAPTER II

1. The Capture of Nineveh Announced and Described. 1-10.
2. The Completeness of the Judgment. 11-13.

1. The Capture of Nineveh Announced and Described: Verses 1-10. This great prophecy was literally fulfilled some ninety years after Nahum had spoken. When these words were spoken Nineveh was in the zenith of her glory. Who told Nahum the Elkoshite that the proud world city would undergo such a sack and be completely wiped out? Who moved his pen to give such a vivid description of what would take place? There is but one answer—the Spirit of God. How was the prophecy fulfilled? Cyaxeres of the Medes had surrounded Nineveh in the north. Nabopolassar of Babylon entered into an alliance with Cyaxares against the Assyrians, which was sealed by the marriage of the daughter of Cyaxares, Amunia, with the son of Nabopolassar, that is, Nebuchadnezzar, who appeared then as the colleague of his father, till the Lord called him as the instrument of judgment upon Jerusalem and he became the head of the Babylonian monarchy (see Dan. xi). They made an assault upon Nineveh. The Assyrian king, a son of Asshurbanipal, collected all his forces into the lower part of the immense city. Three times the forces of the Assyrian sallied forth from the city and inflicted severe punishment upon the besieging armies, and Nabopolassar had great difficulty in keeping the Median forces from flight. The Assyrians after these successes abandoned themselves to great carousings, as stated in Nahum i:10. But during that night they were attacked by the besiegers and driven back behind the walls. Then the troops which were under the command of the brother-in-law of the Assyrian king were routed and driven into the river Tigris. The main part of Nineveh was still safe. In the third year of the siege the river which surrounded the city became its enemy. Great rains had fallen and suddenly there was a tremendous flood which broke down the walls surrounding the city. This was predicted by Nahum in this chapter in the sixth verse. The king despaired of saving his life. He had sent his family north, and when all hope was gone he shut himself up with all his treasures in the royal citadel and burned himself with them. Then the victors entered into the city, and,

after securing an immense booty, which was carried to Babylon and Ecbatana, the Babylonians set fire to the sacked city, and destroyed it completely by fire.

The prophet in the beginning of this chapter addresses Nineveh; he urges that she make ready to defend herself, for he that dasheth into pieces has appeared before her walls. It was the Lord who had used the Assyrian to bring judgment upon Israel and upon Jacob, but now the time had come for the restoration of their former excellency. The Authorized Version gives the wrong sense, and the second verse is correctly rendered: "For the Lord bringeth again the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel; for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches." Then the besieging army is described. Here we read of their glittering arms, their fast racing chariots, which dash along like lightning.

We have heard even reputable Bible teachers make the statement that Nahum predicted the automobiles racing along our streets. Such fanciful, far-fetched and arbitrary applications of the Word of God do immense harm. Nahum does not anticipate the automobile, but gives a picture of the besiegers of Nineveh with their chariots, drawn by swift horses.

In verse 5 the Assyrian king is seen turning to his army, as he sees the chariots dashing along the highways and broadways which lead to the city; he counts his worthies, his generals and captains. And the army suddenly called, in making haste stumbled along in disorder and made haste to reach the walls. As stated above, the sixth verse was fulfilled when the river became a flood and undermined the foundations of the walls, so that the besiegers could enter in. And when Babylon fell, under the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, the river also was the means of defeat, for the enemy had diverted the river Euphrates and through the dry river-bed entered the city.

The word "Huzzab" in the seventh verse has led to a great deal of discussion. Some claim that it is the name of the Queen of Nineveh; others that it is a symbolical

name of the city; archaeology throws no light upon its meaning. We believe the word "Huzzab" should be translated, "It is determined." Then the sentence reads, "It is determined; she is made bare and led away captive; and her maids moan like the doves, smiting upon their breasts."

The flight of the population of Nineveh is pictured in the eighth verse. Like as a pool of water empties when the sluices are opened, so they flee. The soldiers cry "Stand! Stand!" but there is a panic. They rush away and none looks back.

In the next two verses the plundering of the city is predicted. Silver and gold is taken away. There seems to be no end of all the glorious things which were heaped together in Nineveh. The city is emptied; hearts melt, courage is gone; there are tottering knees and pale faces.

2. The Completeness of the Judgment: Verses 11-13. Is it a sarcastic question which is asked, "Where is the den of lions?" What has become of her proud boastings of being the Queen-City of the nations?

Then Jehovah speaks of the completeness of her judgment and overthrow. "Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard."

NINEVEH'S GUILT AND WELL-DESERVED JUDGMENT

CHAPTER III

1. The Great Wickedness of Nineveh. 1-7.
2. Her Fate to be Like the Fate of No-Amon. 8-13.
3. Her Well-deserved and Complete Judgment. 14-19.

1. The Great Wickedness of Nineveh: Verses 1-7. Nineveh was a bloody city, for her kings never knew peace, but were constantly at war. The Hebrew *Ir-Damim* means "City of Blood Drops." They boasted of making the blood of their enemies run like rivers. It was a city full of lies and rapine. Her word could not be trusted; she broke truces and covenants and deceived nations with lying

promises of help and protection. As stated in the second chapter, she was ferocious as a lion and the prey never departed.

But she received as she had sown. The next two verses give again the scenes of carnage during her judgment hour.

"The cracking of the whip;
And the noise of the rattling wheels;
The prancing of the horses,
And the dashing chariots.

The horseman mounting;
And the flashing sword,
And the glittering of the spear;
And the multitude of the slain;
And the heaps of the corpses.
There is no end of dead bodies;
They stumble over their corpses."

And why? "Because of the multitudes of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts." She made herself attractive as a harlot does, to ensnare and beguile weaker nations. Like all these ancient cities she was filled with witchcrafts, that is, sorceries. The power of darkness manifested itself in the dominion of evil spirits, which Nineveh courted. Spiritism, as advocated today by men of research and culture, of the type of Oliver Lodge and Conan Doyle, and a multitude of others, is not a new thing. Egypt, Babylon, and Nineveh and other centers of paganism were filled with occultism, the practice of which hastened their doom; as the doom of our age will be consummated through the influence of the same evil powers.

Then Jehovah speaks again, as the God of retribution and judgment. These are solemn words.

"Behold! I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts;
And uncover thy skirts over thy face,
And display to the nations thy nakedness,
And to kingdoms thy shame!

And I will cast vileness upon thee,
And disgrace thee
And make thee a gazing-stock.

And it shall come to pass,
That all that look upon thee
Shall flee from thee,
And say, Nineveh is laid waste;
Who will lament over her?
Whence shall I seek comforters for her?"

She had acted the harlot and now she receives the punishment of a harlot, which consisted in exposing her in public. She would be a gazing-stock for nations and kingdoms, as the righteous God stripped her of all and exposed her shame. There would be no one to lament over the vile mistress of witchcrafts.

2. Her Fate Like the Fate of No-Amon: Verses 8-13. "Art thou better than No-Amon that dwelt by the rivers? Waters were round about her; her bulwark was the sea and her wall was of the sea. Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and there was no limit; Put and Lubim were thy helpers." No-Amon was an Egyptian city, known to the Greeks by the name of Thebes. The judgment of No-Amon, or, as it is also called, "No," was announced by the prophet Jeremiah. "The Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel saith, Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh and Egypt, with their gods and their kings, even Pharaoh and them that trust in him" (Jer. xlvi:25). Ezekiel likewise had spoken of this great Egyptian city (Ezek. xxx:14-16). There existed an immense temple there in honor of the god of No, the building had great facades and columns and covered a large space; the ruins which are left are still most wonderful to look upon. It was situated on the upper Nile some four hundred miles from Cairo, and was built along the river front. On the other side of the river was the city of the dead, the Necropolis, with a long line of temples, devoted to the worship of former Pharaohs, and behind these temples were thousands of tombs, many of which have been uncovered by the spade of the explorer. The cuneiform monu-

ments tell of the fate of Thebes. Though she was defended by the strong men of Ethiopia and of Egypt and Phut, and the Libyans, nothing could avert her doom. She was carried into captivity, her young children were dashed in pieces, and her great men were bound in chains. Could then Nineveh hope to escape? The fate of No-Amon was a prophecy of Nineveh's fate. She was even more wicked than the Egyptian city. Her fate is described in verses 11-13.

3. Her Well-deserved and Complete Judgment: Verses 14-19. Dramatically the prophet calls upon Nineveh to draw water for the siege, to secure clay for brick to repair the breaches in the wall. But all would be useless, for the Almighty had decreed her downfall. The fire would devour the proud city, the sword do its havoc in cutting them off. Let them be as numerous as the cankerworm (see annotations of Joel i), make thyself as many as the locusts, which come in immense swarms, and it will be all to no avail. Her great commerce, her merchant-princes, were a vast host, like the stars of heaven, but all would soon be devastated, as the cankerworm spoileth and then flies away. Their crowned ones, the chiefs in authority, would all be scattered just as the sun-rise scatters the locusts and swarms of grasshoppers to a place unknown. Their shepherds, the leaders and rulers, under the king of Assyria, would sleep in death, while the population wandered homeless over the mountains, with none to gather them.

Nineveh's ruin is complete and irreparable. All who hear of her fall rejoice and clap their hands.

HABAKKUK

The Prophet Habakkuk

INTRODUCTION

There is a very interesting diversity among these Minor Prophets. Hosea starts with the command of the Lord for a symbolical action to show Israel her spiritual whoredoms. Joel plunges in at once to describe the judgment of the land by the locusts and leads on to the day of the Lord. Amos begins with the announcement of the judgment of the surrounding nations, while Obadiah is chiefly concerned with the judgment of Edom. Jonah is different from all the rest in his miraculous experience, while Micah has a character of his own. Nahum, as we saw, has the one great message of the doom of Nineveh, and brings comfort to God's people. Habakkuk again is different from all the rest. In Nature God displays as Creator a wonderful diversity, and so in His revelation His Spirit uses every instrument in His own way, as it pleases Him.

Of Habakkuk the same holds good as with most of the other Minor Prophets; we know nothing of the particulars of his life. It does not matter much. God knows these holy men, whom he called to make known His will and the future, and He has kept the record of their lives, as He keeps the record of all our lives.

His name means "to embrace," but it has the double meaning "to embrace" and "being embraced." He embraced his own people and embraced God in prayer, then "being embraced"—God answered him. Dr. Martin Luther gave a very striking definition of his name, which cannot be improved upon. "Habakkuk signifies an embracer, or one who embraces another, takes him into his arms. He embraces his people, and takes them to his arms, i. e., he comforts them and holds them up, as one embraces a weeping child, to quiet it with the assurance that if God wills it shall soon be better."

It has been assumed that he probably sprang, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, from a priestly family, for at the end of the great ode, at the conclusion of the book, he states—"to the chief singer on my stringed instruments," from which we may gather that he was officially qualified to take part of the Temple service. But Isaiah xxxviii:20 seems to contradict this.

An apocryphal book, "Bel and the Dragon," states that Habakkuk was miraculously transported to Daniel, who had been cast a second time to the lions by Cyrus. This and other legends are without any foundation at all, and need not be examined, for they are worthless.

THE DATE OF HABAKKUK

As it is with Nahum, so it is with Habakkuk, the superscription does

not fix a definite date, but the contents of the book do not leave us in doubt about the time when this man of God prophesied.

In the sixth verse of the opening chapter we read, "For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs." He therefore prophesied at the time when the Chaldeans, or as they are also called the Babylonians, were coming into power, and soon to be used against the house of Judah, as the Assyrian was used in judgment with the house of Israel. He prophesied during the reign of Josiah, that is at the very close of his reign, and a few years before Nineveh was destroyed, which elevated the Babylonians to the place of prominence. Some have put the date into the reign of Manasseh, the father of Josiah, but this is too early. Josiah died on the battlefield, and after his son Jehoahaz had reigned three months, Pharaoh-necho, who had slain Josiah, made Eliakim, the son of Josiah, king over Judah, and gave him the name of Jehoiakim (see 2 Kings xxiii:28-37).

THE MESSAGE OF HABAKKUK

The language which Habakkuk used is extremely beautiful. Professor Delitzsch speaks of it as follows: "His language is classical throughout, full of rare and select turns and words, which are to some extent exclusively his own, whilst his view and mode of presentation bear the seal of independent force and finished beauty. Notwithstanding the violent rush and lofty soaring of the thoughts, his prophecy forms a finely organized and artistically rounded whole. Like Isaiah, he is, comparatively speaking, much more independent of his predecessors, both in contents and form, than any of the other prophets." "Everything reflects the time when prophecy was in its greatest glory, when the place of the sacred lyrics, in which the religious life had expressed itself, was occupied, through a still mightier interposition on the part of God, by prophetic poetry with its trumpet voice." Much in his message is in the form of communion with the Lord. He begins with the familiar heart-cry, "O Lord, how long shall I cry?" He receives an answer, which announces the coming of the Chaldeans, to which again the prophet replies. Then he said, "I will stand upon my watch, and will set me upon the tower, and will watch and see what He will say unto me" (chapter ii). Then he receives another answer. The judgment of Judah by the Chaldeans as well as the overthrow of the Chaldeans, on account of the deification of their power, is the prophetic message with which he starts.

Sublime is the great lyric ode contained in the third chapter, which begins with a prayer (chapter iii). It is one of the greatest descriptions of the Theophany, the Coming of the Lord, which the Spirit of God has given. He comes in glory and in wrath; the wicked are overthrown, His people are saved. It waits for its great fulfillment when our Lord

Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire with His holy angels.

THE DIVISION OF HABAKKUK

The division is very simple. Chapter i forms the first part and gives the coming invasion of Judah by the Chaldeans. In chapter ii the "Woe" is pronounced upon the Chaldeans and their destruction is predicted. The third chapter contains the Vision of the Coming of the Lord, with which all the ungodly world powers terminate, and the dominion of the Gentiles ends.

Inasmuch as the Authorized Version contains numerous incorrect renderings, we give a complete text in a metric version.

The Prophet Habakkuk

CHAPTER I

1. The Burden, which Habakkuk, the prophet, saw.

2. How long, O Lord, must I cry
And Thou hearest not?
I cry to Thee: Violence!
And Thou dost not help.

3. Why dost Thou show me iniquity,
And cause me to behold grievance?
Oppression and violence are before me;
There is strife, and contention ariseth.

4. Therefore the law is slacked;
And justice doth never go forth
For the wicked compass about the righteous;
Therefore justice goes forth perverted.

5. Behold ye among the nations and regard!
And wonder marvellously;
For I work a work in your days
Which ye will not believe, though it were told.

6. For behold! I raise up the Chaldeans,
That bitter and impetuous nation,
Which march through the breadth of the earth.
To possess dwelling-places that are not theirs.

7. They are terrible and dreadful,
Their judgment and dignity proceed from themselves.

8. Swifter than leopards are their horses,
And fiercer than the evening wolves.
Their horsemen shall spread themselves,
And their horsemen shall come from afar.
They fly like an eagle hastening to devour.

9. All of them come for violence;
The host of their faces is forward;
And they gather captives like the sand.

10. Yea, he scoffeth at kings,
And princes are a derision unto him.
He laughs at every stronghold
For he heapeth up earth and taketh it.

11. Then he sweepeth by as a tempest
And shall pass over and be guilty,
He whose might is his god.

12. Art Thou not from Everlasting,
Jehovah, my God, my Holy One?
We shall not die!
Jehovah! Thou has appointed them for judgment;
And Thou, O Rock! Thou has established him for chastisement.

13. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil;
Thou canst not look upon injustice.
Why lookest Thou upon the treacherous?
Why art Thou silent when the wicked destroys
The man that is more righteous than he?

14. And Thou makest men like fishes of the sea,
Like reptiles that have no ruler.

15. All of them he lifts up with the hook,
He catcheth them in His net
And gathers them in his drag;
Therefore he rejoices and is glad.

16. Therefore he sacrificeth to his net,
And burneth incense to his drag,
Because by them his portion is rich,
And his food plenteous.

17. Shall he, therefore, empty his net,
And spare not to slay the nations continually?

CHAPTER II

1. I will stand upon my watch,
And set me upon the tower,
And I will wait to see what He will say to me,
And what I shall answer as to my complaint.

2. And Jehovah answered me and said:
Write the vision and make it plain on tablets,
That he may run that reads it.

3. For the vision is yet for the appointed time,
And it hastens to the end, and shall not lie;
Though it tarry, wait for it;
Because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

4. Behold the proud:
His soul is not right within him;
But the just shall live by his faith.

5. And moreover, wine is treacherous;
A haughty man, that keepeth not at home:
Who enlargeth this desire as Sheol,
As death he is and cannot be satisfied,
And gathereth all nations to himself
And heapeth unto him all peoples.

6. Will not all these take up a song against him?
And a taunting proverb against him, and say:
Woe to him who increaseth what is not his own!
How long?
And that ladeth himself with pledges.

7. Will not thy biters rise up suddenly,
And those awake that shall shake thee violently?
And thou wilt become a prey to them.

8. Because thou hast plundered many nations,
All the remnant of the peoples shall plunder thee;
Because of men's blood, and for the violence done to the land,
To the city and all that dwell therein.

9. Woe to him that procureth a wicked gain for his house,
To set his nest on high,
To secure himself from the hand of disaster.

10. Thou has devised shame for thy house,
By cutting off many peoples, and sinning against thyself.

11. For the stone crieth out from the wall,
And the beam out of the wood-work answers it.

12. Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood,
And founds a city by iniquity.

13. Behold is it not from Jehovah of hosts,
That the peoples labor for the fire,
And the nations weary themselves for vanity?

14. For the earth shall be filled
With the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah,
As the waters cover the sea.

15. Woe to him that giveth his neighbor to drink,
Pouring out thy fury, and also making drunk,
In order to look upon their nakedness.

16. Thou are filled full with shame instead of glory,
Drink thou also, and be like the uncircumcised:
The cup of Jehovah's right hand shall be turned to thee,
And vile shame shall be upon thy glory.

17. For the violence done to Lebanon shall cover thee,
And the destruction of wild beasts which made them afraid,
Because of the blood of men, and the violence done to the land,
To the city and all that dwell therein.

18. What profiteth a graven image, that its maker has carved?
The molten image, and the teacher of lies,
That the maker of his image trusts therein, to make dumb idols?

19. Woe to him that saith to the wood, Awake;
To the dumb stone, Arise!
Shall it teach? Behold it is overlaid with gold and silver;
And there is no breath in its inside.

20. But Jehovah is in His holy temple,
Let all the earth be silent before Him.

CHAPTER III

1. A prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet, set to Shigionoth.

2. O Jehovah! I have heard the report of Thee. I am afraid!
O Jehovah! revive Thy work in the midst of the years;
In the midst of the years make it known;
In wrath remember mercy.

3. God cometh from Teman,
And the Holy One from Mount Paran.—Selah.
His glory covereth the heavens,
And the earth is full of His glory.

4. His brightness is like the sun;
Rays are streaming from His hand;
And there is the hiding of His power.

5. Before Him goeth the pestilence;
And fiery bolts follow His feet.

6. He standeth and measureth the earth;
He looketh and maketh nations tremble;
The everlasting mountains are broken to pieces;
The eternal hills sink down:
His goings are as of old.

7. I saw the tents of Cushan in trouble;
The tent-curtains of Midian are trembling.

8. Was it against the rivers Thou wert displeased, O Jehovah?
Was Thine anger against the rivers?
Was Thy fury against the sea?
That Thou didst ride upon Thy horses,
In Thy chariots of victory?

9. Thy bow is made completely bare;
Rods (of chastisement) are sworn by Thy Word,
Thou cleavest the earth with rivers.

10. The mountains saw Thee, and trembled;
The flood of waters passeth over;
The deep uttereth its voice,
And lifteth up its hands on high.

11. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation;
At the light of Thine arrows, which flew,
At the slinging of Thy glittering spear.

12. In wrath Thou marchest through the earth;
In fury Thou treadest down the nations.

13. Thou goest forth for the salvation of Thy people,
For the salvation of Thine anointed;
Thou dashest in pieces the head out of the house of the wicked,
Laying bare the foundation even to the neck.—Selah.

14. Thou piercest with his own staves the chief of his warriors,
That rush on like a whirlwind to scatter me;
Their rejoicing is to devour the poor secretly.

15. Thou treadest upon the sea with Thine horses,
The swelling of mighty waters.

16. I heard, and my bowels trembled;
My lips quivered at the sound;
Rottenness entered my bones;
And I trembled in my place,
That I might rest in the day of trouble
When he that approaches the nation presseth upon it.

17. For though the fig-tree shall not blossom,
Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
The fruit of the olive tree fails
And the fields shall yield no food;
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
And there shall be no cattle in the stalls.

18. Yet will I rejoice in Jehovah,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19. Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength,
And makes my feet like the hinds',
And will make me to walk upon mine high places.
(For the Chief Musician, on my stringed instruments.)

Analysis and Annotations

THE JUDGMENT OF JUDAH THROUGH THE CHALDEANS ANNOUNCED

CHAPTER I

1. The Prophet's Cry to Jehovah. 1-4.
2. The Answer. 5-11.
3. The Prophet's Plea. 12-17.

1. The Prophet's Cry to Jehovah: Verses 1-4. The prophet begins his message with a prayer-cry to Jehovah. He whose name is "the embracer" embraces the Lord and cries to Him on account of the conditions prevailing in Judah. The Spirit of God stirred up the heart of Habakkuk on account of the moral conditions in Judah. He is jealous for Jehovah's glory, which manifested itself in hating the evil. "There is no prophetic delivery among the twelve lesser books more peculiar and characteristic than that of Habakkuk. It has no longer the occupation with the enemy as its main feature, although the enemy is referred to; but for its prominent topic we find the soul of the prophet, as representing the faithful among Judah, brought into deep exercise, and indeed a kind of colloquy between God Himself and the prophet, so as to set out not only that which gave him trouble of heart, but also divine comfort, as well as into exulting hope into which he was led by the communications of the Spirit of God."

Like Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, Habakkuk is deeply stirred on account of the declension among the people of God, and that led him to cry to Jehovah, to tell Him all about it. He begins with "How long, O Lord." It is the cry of the saints of God in all generations. We, too, in the midst of the increasing apostasy, the perilous times, cry to Him, "How long, O Lord." He had cried and there seemed to be no answer. Heaven was silent. And with him the righteous among the Jews had cried for help and for a change

of conditions, under which they were suffering affliction. Wickedness and violence were evident on all sides. Strife and contention were the continued order of things. They injured each other wherever they could. The Law of God was completely flouted; there was no more justice, and the wicked compassed about the righteous.

2. The Answer: Verses 5-11. Jehovah speaks and answers the complaint of His servant. He is going to raise up the Chaldeans to chastise His wayward people. The Lord is calling on His people, that they should see now what He was going to do. "Behold ye among the nations, and regard, and wonder marvellously; for I work a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it were told you." The meaning is that they should look around among the nations, the faithless ones among the Jews, and see how the storm would gather and ultimately break over the head of the house of Judah. He would work a judgment work, which they would not believe, it would be an unparalleled occurrence, amazing and terrible. This passage is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Acts xiii:41 and applied to the unbelievers and despisers of the Gospel. In the quotation the Spirit of God led the Apostle to omit the address to the nations, and substituted for it "Ye despisers." While in Habakkuk's day God was about to work a work of judgment, which the unbelievers would not believe when they heard of it, we note that Paul preached the Gospel; he has reference to speaking to the Jews in the synagogue; preached the Gospel unto them, and they did not believe. Then He worked a work which they would not believe, in sending that Gospel far hence to the Gentiles (Acts xxviii) while the unbelieving Jews would be dispersed among the nations.

In verse 6 the instrument of chastisement is announced, and afterward described. A new power would arise, the Chaldeans. They would make an invasion, and possess dwelling places which were not theirs, that is, they would set out for a widespread conquest and take away the dwelling place of Judah. They were to be the instrument in the hand of God to mete out judgment to the Jews and humble

them, as well as other nations. The Chaldeans, called in Hebrew *Hakkadsim* were of Semitic origin, springing from Kesed, the son of Nahor, and brother of Abraham (Gen. xxii:22). Jeremiah, who also announced the Chaldean invasion, speaks of them in the following manner: "Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from afar, O house of Israel, saith the Lord; it is a mighty nation, an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say. Their quiver is an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat, they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig-trees; they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustest, with the sword. Nevertheless, in those days, saith the Lord, I will not make a full end of you" (Jer. v:15-18). Their terrible onslaught is here compared with the swiftness of the leopards, their fierceness with the prowling evening wolves, and their horsemen in their dash with the eagle's flight. They come for violence and know no defeat, for their faces are always forward. They make prisoners like the sand, and mock all attempts to check their advance; kings and princes are ridiculed and all strongholds are quickly reduced.

But as he is victorious the Chaldean becomes proud and forgets that he was but used as an instrument in the hand of God to deal with those who had done evil. As a result, they imputed their power to their own god, and do not give God the honor and the glory. His own might is his god. Then comes the day when the Lord takes the Chaldean in hand for judgment and deals with him, as He dealt with other nations. Nebuchadnezzar, the first great king of Babylon, after his humiliating experience, acknowledged the God of Heaven, but his grandson Belshazzar praised the Babylonian idol-gods, at his licentious feast, dishonoring the temple vessels. Then followed the judgment of the Chaldeans in the overthrow of Babylon.

3. The Prophet's Plea: Verses 12-17. The prophet had listened to the terrible announcement from the lips of

Jehovah, what was to befall his nation. How it must have shocked the man of God! But he knows the comfort and expresses it in faith at once. "Art Thou not from everlasting, O Jehovah, my God, my Holy One? we shall not die!" He knows Jehovah as the faithful God, the covenant-keeping God. Such a God will surely not permit the nation, to whom He has pledged His Word, to be wiped out. His faith lays hold on that and he realizes that the Lord is using this enemy for correction, to chastise His people. And furthermore in his plea he says, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, Thou canst not look upon injustice." Would He, the righteous God, look on unconcerned at the wicked deeds of the Chaldeans? Can He remain silent to all their deeds of violence? If such is the case, the prophet asks next, "Why lookest Thou upon the treacherous; why art Thou silent when the wicked destroys?" It is the voice of the godly remnant here, seen suffering with the nation. It brings before us the same question concerning the suffering of the righteous.

The Chaldean took men as if they were fishes; as a fisherman puts out the net and the drag, so they catch men by the net and the drag. Gathering in the poeple with their wealth, he rejoices and is glad. Then the prophet takes up the statement given by the Lord that the Chaldean would offend, and fall by his pride, and the worship of his false gods, He sacrifices to his net; he burns incense; he makes the thing which prospers him his idol, his god. Is this then to go on continually? Shall he who empties his net, and throws it out to catch more, to do this again with the nations forever?

Such was the plea of Habakkuk, after the announcement of the coming chastisement of the Jews by the Chaldean He knows that the affliction could not continue forever, for God is a covenant-keeping God, and of purer eyes than to behold evil, a holy and a righteous God.

THE UNGODLINESS OF THE CHALDEANS AND THEIR DESTRUCTION

CHAPTER II

1. The Waiting Prophet and the Message He Received. 1-4.
2. The Five-fold Woe upon the Chaldeans. 5-20.

1. The Waiting Prophet and the Message He Received: Verses 1-4. It seems there was no immediate answer to the plea of the prophet. He then speaks to himself and expresses his attitude. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and I will wait to see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer as to my complaint." He watches like a sentinel upon a watch-tower for the answer the Lord will give him. It does not mean that the prophet actually ascended a tower, but he expresses his innermost attitude by the symbol of a watchman. He remained silent and eagerly looked for the reply.

How long he waited is not stated. But the answer came, for the Lord never disappoints His inquiring and waiting servants. He is told to write the vision and make it plain upon the tablets, that he may run that readeth it. Thus the Lord spoke to him and gave him the vision, which he was to write in plain characters upon tablets. The effect should be not that he that runneth may read (as it is sometimes misquoted) but that he that readeth may run. The Prophetic Word is always plain. It is far from being the deep and complicated portion of God's Truth that some make it, but it needs an ear opened by the Spirit of God. Prophecy believed is a great stimulating agent to Christian service, even as it is stated here, that the reader of the vision runs to spread the message.

In the next place we hear of the certainty of the vision. It is for the appointed time. It hastes toward the end, and shall not lie. The prophet is commanded to wait for it, though it tarry, and then receives the assurance that it will surely come and not tarry. These are important instructions by which many a believer might profit. God has an appointed time for all His purposes and their fulfillment. He cannot be hastened, for His schedule was made before

the foundation of the world. When the appointed time comes all visions will be accomplished. It hastens toward the end. That end is the end of the times of the Gentiles, which began with the rising of the Babylonians, and the first great king, Nebuchadezzar, the golden head in the prophetic image of Daniel ii. When the end of the times of the Gentiles comes, the world-power then, final Babylon as revealed in the last Book of the Bible, will be judged and the Lord will be manifested in all His glory. The prophet's business is, as well as that of every believer, to wait for it and not to be disturbed if there is delay, for the assurance is given that it will surely come and not tarry. And here faith can rest.

Part of this is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x:37). From this quotation we learn that the vision which will surely come is a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the center of every vision and without Him there is no vision. The Septuagint translation is the same: "If He tarry wait for Him, for coming He will come and not delay."

In the fourth verse, which may properly be taken to be the opening statement for the vision which follows, the all importance of faith in the vision is made known. The proud one who is mentioned must primarily be applied to the haughty Chaldean, but it is equally true of the unbelieving, proud Jew, and of the nominal Christian. The proud, the puffed up one, his soul is not right within him, and God resisteth the proud, while he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

"But the just shall live by faith." Criticism has not left this matchless sentence untouched. The Higher Critic Davidson labors to show that the Hebrew word for faith (Emunoh) means faithfulness, dealing in faithfulness in money matters, that is, one who deals honestly. According to his statement the verse means if an Israelite, or anybody else, does right he will live. But in Genesis we read, "Abraham believed the Lord and He counted it to him for righte-

ousness." As every intelligent Christian knows, there was no Law then, and the New Testament in the testimony of the Holy Spirit makes it plain that this is the Gospel of Grace in which the ungodly are justified; justified by faith. Interesting is the quotation of the sentence "the just shall live by faith" in the three passages of the New Testament Epistles.

Romans i:17 quotes this sentence. In this passage the emphasis is upon the word "just." The theme of Romans is the Righteousness of God, at least in the opening chapters. It shows how a person, a lost and guilty sinner, becomes righteous, and as such is saved. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

In Galatians iii:11 the emphasis is upon the word "faith." "But no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, as it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith."

In Hebrews x:38 the emphasis is upon "live." "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall *live* by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

2. The Five-fold Woe upon the Chaldeans: Verses 5-20. The Lord uncovers the wicked conditions prevailing among the Chaldeans. God had allowed the people whom He loved to be chastised by an evil instrument; they were to be crushed by injustice and by the actions of the cruel invader. But the character and conduct of the oppressor, the Chaldeans, was not unknown to Him, as the prophet expressed it, "Who is of purer eyes than to behold evil." And now the righteous Lord announces the five-fold woe upon the wicked world-power. While all this applies primarily to the Chaldean, it is likewise a prophecy concerning the future. The world powers remain the same to the end of the times of the Gentiles. It was true then, as it is true now, and will be true in the future throughout this present age, "The world lieth in the Wicked One." There is no improvement to be looked for among the world powers, and as we have seen so frequently in the study of the prophets, the end of the age

brings still greater opposition and defiance of God, with a corresponding moral decline. We see therefore in these verses a description of the world conditions down to its very end. The word "wine" does not need to be interpreted in a literal way, though drunkeness was one of the sins of the Babylonians. They were inflamed with an ambition for conquest, as a drunken man is inflamed with wine. This intoxication made them treacherous, haughty, restless: like death, which is never satisfied, so they are never satisfied; constantly pressing on they spoil the nations, gather prisoners, and act in violence. How can God permit this to go unjudged?

Then follows a taunting song in verses 6-7. Divine retribution is coming for them. The spoiler is going to be spoiled. It is the retribution which may be read in all history, which still continues, for of nations it is true as of individuals, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

The second woe is on account of their covetousness and their self-aggrandizement. Like Edom, they were possessed by an abominable pride to make their nest high, they imagine self-security, thinking they can avert "the power of evil." But their proud plans were to result in shame; their security would end in collapse and confusion. It is well known how Nebuchadnezzar manifested this spirit. One day this proud monarch walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. "The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?" The humiliation which came upon the king is prophetic. Thus the Lord will humble the proud world-power into the dust (Dan. iv).

Then comes a third Woe. Verses 12-14 are of special interest, for they give us a picture of a godless civilization and its appointed end. Their cruel oppression, their ungodly gains, had built up a magnificent city. Excavations have shown what a marvelous civilization was in force when Babylon was mistress of the world. But the foundations of it all were iniquity and the blood of victims. Is it any better

today? We have seen the top-notch of a boasted civilization, steeped in iniquity and defiance of God, suddenly collapsing and producing a war of horrors and cruelty which makes the conquests and atrocities of the Chaldeans pale into insignificance.

And how true it is today, "The peoples labor for the fire, the nations weary themselves for vanity." The day is approaching when this civilization will be swept away, and before the better things come, the kingdom is established and He reigns whose right it is, there will be the fires of judgment. And after that it will be true, as it cannot be true before, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

The fourth woe shows the corruption which held sway in the Babylonian empire. Drunkeness here is a figure of the utter prostration of the nations which the Chaldeans had conquered; they stripped them in their wicked endeavors of all they possessed. They spread a shameless dissolution in every direction. For this they will have to drink the cup of fury from the hand of the Lord, and shall be covered with vile shame, so that their glory will be blotted out.

The fifth woe is on account of their idolatry. They worshipped wood and stone. Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden image in the plain of Dura and demanded worship for it. The spiritual Babylon, Rome, is a well-organized system of idolatry which goes on undiminished. Finally the age ends in idolatry, for the image of the Beast of Revelation xiii is still future.

"But the Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." First, by way of contrast, their idols are dumb; Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the living God. He is in His holy temple; from there He takes notice of the doings of men. He is the Sovereign, the only Potentate; the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance (Isa. xl:15). "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a cur-

tain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isa. xl:22).

But this closing verse of the chapter of woe has a prophetic meaning. When at last the world-power is dethroned, when the Lord returns, He will take His place as King of Kings. He will be in His holy Temple, and then all the earth will keep silence before Him.

THE VISION OF THE COMING OF THE LORD

CHAPTER III

1. The Prophet's Prayer. 1-2.
2. The Coming of the Lord for Judgment and Redemption. 3-15.
3. The Effect upon the Prophet. 16-19.

1. The Prophet's Prayer: Verses 1-2. Once more we hear the voice of the man of God in prayer. Shigionoth is the plural of Shiggaion, and is found in the superscription of Psalm vii. Its meaning is "loud crying." The connection with the seventh Psalm is interesting. In that Psalm God appeared to David as the God of judgment, the righteous God who must save His righteous people and condemn the wicked. (See Annotations on Psalm vii.) The prophet had listened to the message and penned it as we have it in the preceding chapter. It struck terror to his heart and he trembled. Therefore he pleads for a revival of the Lord's work in the midst of the years. He must have taken a hasty glance over the past history of his people, how God had worked in their behalf in Egypt, redeemed them, led them forth, and the many evidences of the display of His power in behalf of the elect nation. And now, in the midst of years, he asks a revival of this work, the interposition of Jehovah, that He may be known in His power. The text is often quoted in pleading a revival among the dead conditions of Christendom. But it is the revival of the work of the Lord in a very different sense of the word, as we have indicated.

He knows that wrath is on the way. Not only wrath for the Chaldeans, but for his people, that the unbelieving, the apostates, would also have to face the judgment. Therefore he pleads, "In wrath remember mercy." Such is the way

of God always. Judgment is His strange work, and mercy is mingled with His judgments. It will be so in connection with the winding up of this present age, when judgment wrath sweeps over the earth, and especially Israel's land; He then will have mercy upon His people. The time of wrath will be His time of mercy, the covenant mercies promised to Israel. "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come." And when will that be? When the Lord shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory (Psa. cii:13-16).

The great inspired ode which follows is one of the greatest sections of Prophecy. It is a wonderful theophany the Spirit of God describes. Wrath and Mercy are manifested, so that it is an answer to the prophet's plea, "In wrath remember mercy."

It has been said, "The poet describes a great storm, advancing from the south, the region of Paran and Sinai. In the dark storm clouds he conceives Jehovah to be concealed; the lightning flashes which illumine heaven and earth disclose glimpses of the dazzling brightness immediately about him; the earth quakes, the hills sink, and the neighboring desert tribes look on in dismay" (Canon Driver). Thus Higher Criticism reduces one of the sublimest inspired prophecies, concerning the future appearing of the Lord, to the level of poetry.

The great description of His coming must be linked with similar prophecies (See Deut. xxxiii:2; Psa. xviii:8-19, 33, 34; Psa. lxviii:8, 34; Psa. lxxvii:17-20). The great ode, cast in the form of a Psalm, begins with the statement that God cometh from Teman and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Moses in his prophetic blessing also begins with a similar declaration. "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose from Seir unto them; He shined from Mount Paran, and He came with the thousands of His saints (angels); from His right hand went a fiery law for them." Just as He was manifested when He had redeemed them out of Egypt, and constituted them His Kingdom people at Sinai (Exod. xix), so will He appear again to deliver the remnant of His people

from the dominion of the world-power, and judge them as He judged Egypt. He comes from the direction of Edom, for Teman is the southern district of Idumea, while Paran is more southward. Isaiah also beheld him advancing from the same direction. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" (Isa. lxiii:1-6). It is unfortunate that the Authorized Version has "God came from Teman," when it is "God cometh," not a past but a future event. After this opening statement the first Selah is put. This means to pause and to lift up. We are to pause and meditate, and then to lift up our hearts and voices in praise and thanksgiving. It is found seventy-one times in the Psalms and three times in this chapter of Habakkuk.

His glory covers the heavens, while the earth is filled with His praise. Heaven and earth reflect the glory of the Coming One. How all this corresponds with the divine statements concerning His Coming in the New Testament does not need to be pointed out. He comes in power and great glory, in the clouds of heaven, as Daniel beheld Him in the night vision, and as our Lord testified Himself. Brightness fills the sky as He appears in person, while out of His hand glory rays emanate, the hiding of His power. The picture is evidently taken from the rising sun, which shoots forth great rays, heralding its ascending. As Delitzsch remarks, "His hand" means in a general sense, as signifying the hand generally, and not a single hand only. May we not have here a hint of His hands pierced once, but now emanating glory? Before Him goes the pestilence, indicating the trouble which precedes His Coming, when the four apocalyptic riders bring war, famine, pestilence, and death in judgment for this earth.

With the sixth verse He draws nearer. Up to this point in the theophany He is described as coming forth, like the sun out of His chamber, heaven and earth reflecting His glory, but now He stands and measures the earth; He looks and the nations tremble, while all creation is affected, and earthquakes shake down the mountains.

Then the prophet sees the tents of Cushan in affliction and the curtains of Midian tremble. Cushan means the

Ethiopians, and the Midianites inhabited the Arabian coast along the Red Sea. The past is seen as a prophecy of the future. As He once came at Sinai, when the mountains shook and the hills trembled, and as once the tidings of the Red Sea disaster inspired terror among the neighboring nations, so will it be, only on a larger scale, when He comes in great power and glory.

The verses which follow (verses 8-15) are in the form of an address to God. The rivers and the seas, and the mountains feel His wrath; they represent symbolically the nations and the world-powers. He is seen marching in anger through the earth and in His fury treading down the nations. It is a majestic picture the Spirit of God gives of that coming day of wrath and judgment.

But while He comes thus, executing wrath and judgment upon the ungodly, He comes in mercy. He goes forth for the salvation of His people, for the salvation of Thine anointed, that is, the elect nation and the God-fearing, waiting remnant of the last days (see Psa. cv:15). And there will be on the earth in that day the head of the house of the wicked, the ungodly head, the man of sin, the heading up of all apostasy and opposition to God. His doom is predicted in verse 13, followed by another Selah, like verses 3 and 9.

3. The Effect upon the Prophet: Verses 16-19. The prophet now speaks of his own feeling, which reflects the feeling of the godly among the Jews when this great theophany becomes history. There is fear and trembling in view of the coming tribulation. When he heard it he trembled; he is completely prostrated. He desires rest in the day of trouble, the day when the final enemy of God's people marches through the land. Then faith is triumphant, and in one of the most magnificant outbursts the prophet declares his confidence in his God (verse 17). Such will be the faith of the godly who pass through the time of great trouble. Finally he rejoices in the God of his salvation and declares his hope that his feet will be like hinds' feet to escape to the high places. Even so the remnant of Israel will be delivered. We leave the application to the Church-Saints with the reader.

ZEPHANIAH

The Prophet of Zephaniah

INTRODUCTION

Zephaniah is the last of the prophets before the captivity, according to the arrangement of the Hebrew Bible. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are post-exilic. His name means "Jehovah hides." His genealogy is traced back for four generations. Zephaniah was the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah. We have therefore more information concerning him than of most of the other minor prophets. There must be a reason why these four generations are given. We believe the reason is to show that he was of royal descent, the great-grandson of the pious king of Judah, Hezekiah. Hizkiah is the same as Hezekiah in the Hebrew. Jewish tradition as well as the reliable rabbinical sources confirm this. The objection that the royal title is not given in connection with Hizkiah is insignificant; at any rate "king of Judah" is mentioned in connection with Josiah in the first verse of the book of Zephaniah, so that it may have been left out in connection with Hizkiah on purpose. As to his personal history we have no further information. It seems as if the Lord has hidden for a good reason these details of his chosen instruments.

THE DATE OF ZEPHANIAH

The date is given in the first verse. He prophesied in the days of Josiah the king of Judah. We are therefore not left in doubt about the time in which he exercised his office as prophet; he was the contemporary of Jeremiah and Micah. As to the exact time during the reign of Josiah in which Zephaniah prophesied, we can be quite sure that it was during the time of the reformation instituted by the king, that is between the twelfth and eighteenth year; yet the reformation was still in process and not yet fully completed. The temple must have been purified from the idol abominations, for Zephaniah presupposes the maintenance of the temple worship.

THE MESSAGE OF ZEPHANIAH

To understand the message we must consider the character of the times in which the prophet lived, and the conditions in Judah. We have done so already in connection with the annotations on Jeremiah, but add here another description. As already stated a great reformation was in progress, which, like all reformation, ended in deformation, producing a reaction which plunged the house of Judah into the final apostasy. It seems the reformation was mostly an outward one; in their hearts the people still had a longing for the idols and the abomina-

tions connected with them (i:4). We shall point out in the Annotations some of the details of the evils prevailing at that time.

Like the other minor prophets, judgment is announced first, followed by exhortations to repentance, with the promises of glory for the remnant of His people when the day of Jehovah is passed and the Lord is King over all the earth. He proclaims the judgment to come for the whole earth, as well as upon Judah and Jerusalem, and then gives a fuller description of the day in which that judgment is to be executed, the still future day of Jehovah. As we have seen, Obadiah and Joel are the earliest prophets, and both announced the Day of Jehovah. The last of the prophets before the captivity bears his additional testimony to the same day, describing it as a day of wrath, of trouble and distress. This is the first chapter.

In the second chapter the exhortations begin. He exhorts the nation to repent and to seek the Lord, so that they might be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. Then he announced that the day is surely coming upon all the nations, and that the isles of the nations will not escape.

In the third chapter the prophet shows how the Lord will deal in judgment also with the ungodly among His people. He announces His purpose concerning the nations with the expectation that the godly remnant among the Jews will fear Him then, and receive instruction and wait for Him.

Then follows the joyous message of the future salvation of the elect people. It will be a poor afflicted remnant which trusts in the Lord, which, born again, will be a holy people, separated from evil. This is followed by the singing times. "Sing, daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy; the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more."

THE DIVISION OF ZEPHANIAH

Like Nahum's prophecy, Zephaniah's is one great prophetic utterance. The division into three chapters, as given in the Authorized Version, is the correct arrangement, with the exception of the first eight verses of chapter iii, which should be added to the second chapter. The subdivisions will be pointed out in the analysis and annotations.

Analysis and Annotations

THE DAY OF THE LORD, THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

CHAPTER I

1. The Judgment of all the World. 1-3.
2. The Judgment will Destroy the Evil Doers in Judah. 4-13.
3. The Day of the Lord. 14-18.

1. The Judgment of all the World: Verses 1-3. The first verse is the superscription, and tells us, as pointed out in the introduction, of the connection of Zephaniah and the date of his prophecy.

Then comes the announcement of the judgment. It is to consume all things from off the face of the land, man and beast, the fowls of heaven, the fishes of the sea, and end the stumbling blocks of the wicked, that is, their idols and idol worship. The land is not to be understood as being Israel's land exclusively; it means the earth. That the judgment vision of Zephaniah has a wider scope than the land and the people is fully confirmed by other passages. The great day comes upon men everywhere (i:17); it is universal (ii:4-15); all the isles of the nations are mentioned (ii:11).

2. The Judgment will Destroy the Evil Doers in Judah: Verses 4-13. It will fall especially upon the house of Judah and Jerusalem. In the verses which follow we have a description of the moral conditions of the Jews when Josiah started his reformation, which prophetically gives us a picture of the conditions among the Jews when this age closes, and a portion of them is back in the land of their fathers, as they are attempting to get it back now through political Zionism.

The hand of the Lord will be stretched out upon Judah and Jerusalem. The remnant of Baal will be cut off and the Chemarim, with the priests. Idolatry, whatever remains of it, should then be completely abolished. "Baal" was the idol of god of the Phoenicians and Canaanites; the

word means "lord" or "possessor." With the worship of this god licentious practices were connected. Chemarim is the name of the idolatrous priests which conducted the high places, appointed for this service by the kings of Judah (see 2 Kings xxiii:5). In verses 5 and 6 other forms of idolatry are mentioned. They worshipped the hosts of the heavens from housetops. They worshipped the stars, and studied their movements as if they could give them help and a revelation. Astrology, so widely practised among civilized nations today, is an old cult (see 2 Kings xxi:3, 5; Jer. viii:2; xix:13). Others used the Holy Name of Jehovah, and at the same time they used the name of Malcham. All was a turning back from Jehovah and dishonoring His Name.

As to the future curse of idolatry among the Jews, the passage in Matthew xii:43, 45, the words of our Lord, gives us the full information. The unclean spirit there is the the spirit of idolatry, from which the Jews in their dispersion are free; the unclean spirit has left the house. But it is to return, and the last state is worse than the first: "Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." They will worship the man of sin, the masterpiece of Satan, who in the end of the age will take his place in the temple of God (2 Thess. ii).

The day of the Lord is at hand; a statement which verifies our interpretation that this prophecy refers to the future day. The Lord has prepared His sacrifice and bidden his guests. It is the supper of the great God, to which He invites His guests. Read in connection with this Revelation xix:17-18. What that day will bring is described in verses 8-13. All the evil doers will be dealt with by the Lord.

3. The Day of the Lord: Verses 14-18. The great day of the Lord is now more fully described. It is the day when the announced judgment will take place. Higher criticism sees nothing but some invasion of the land by hostile forces. But it is the same great day, the culmination of the past ages, when Jehovah is revealed, so vividly described in

Joel ii:11. On that day the voice of the Lord will be heard (Psa. xxix; Isa. lxvi:6). When that day comes the mighty man will cry out in bitterness, for he is unable to save himself from the judgment tempest. In two verses the prophet describes vividly the greatness of that day.

A day of wrath is that day,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of ruin and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and cloudy darkness;
A day of the trumpet and the warcry
Against the fortified cities,
And against the lofty battlements.

Thomas of Celano used in 1250 the Vulgate translation of the first sentence *Dies irae, dies illa* in writing his famous judgment hymn. It is well to compare Scripture with Scripture about that day. (For instance, verse 15 with Joel iii; Amos v:18, 20; viii:9; Isaiah xiii:10, and many other passages.) When that day comes the wicked will perish; distress will be upon all. They will walk like blind men, that is, trying to find a way to escape, but not able to find one. Nothing will be able to deliver from the fury of that day, neither silver nor gold will avail anything.

THE CALL TO REPENTANCE IN VIEW OF THE JUDGMENT

CHAPTERS II-III-8

1. The Call to Repentance. 1-3.
2. The Judgment of the Philistines. 4-7.
3. The Judgment of Moab and Ammon. 8-10.
4. The Judgment of other Nations. 11-15.
5. The Woe and Warning to Jerusalem and His People, iii:1-8.

1. The Call to Repentance: Verses 1-3. As we found it in Joel, so it is here. In view of the coming of the day, the call goes forth to the nation to humble themselves and to repent. On the near horizon in Joel the Assyrian invasion was threatening. In Zephaniah it is the Babylonian power. But all points to the future day of the Lord. They are to

gather themselves together. The word used for "gather" has the meaning of gathering stubble or wood for burning. In their unbelief they were worthless as stubble and dry wood, fit for the burning. The phrase "not desired" has been translated "which does not turn pale." But this cannot be sustained. The better meaning is "unashamed."

The second verse gives the reason why they should humble themselves and be ashamed of all their evil doings. Because the decree of judgment has gone forth, the fierce anger of the Lord in His day is about to pass as the chaff. This is followed by the appeal to seek the Lord. This is addressed to the meek in the land, the godly remnant which fears the Lord, both in Zephaniah's day and in the end of the age, when "that day" comes. They are meek and seek to keep the statutes and judgments of the Lord in a righteous life. Still they are exhorted to seek meekness. For it is this, meekness and lowliness, that pleases the Lord. The promise is held out that they would be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. Zephaniah means "hidden by the Lord" or "whom the Lord hides;" his name comes into play as a comfort that the godly will be hid in the day of the Lord. In Isaiah we have a more direct word about this. "Come, my people, enter thou in thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Isa. xxvi:20). This has often been used as a proof text that the true church is not to pass through the great tribulation period. But it has nothing whatever to do with the church, but is the promise given to the godly remnant (See Rev. xii; the preservation of the seed of the woman). It is the teaching of the New Testament that the true church will be taken to her heavenly abode by the coming of the Lord for His saints (1 Thess. iv:13-18; 2 Thess. ii).

2. The Judgment of the Philistines: Verses 4-7. Judgment is to come in that day upon Gaza and Ashkelon, upon Asdod and Ekron, the chief cities of Philistia. The inhabitants of the seacoast, the nation of the Cherethites, and all the land of the Philistines, will undergo judgment. The seventh verse gives the connection with the opening

message of the chapter, the call to repentance. "And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon; in the house of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening; for the Lord their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity." Because the remnant is to possess this territory when Philistia is judged they ought to repent and seek the Lord. That this is still unaccomplished hardly needs to be pointed out. It was not fulfilled in the remnant which returned from the Babylonian captivity. Since the day of their rejection, when they rejected Christ, they have been out of the land. Here is a prophecy of ultimate blessing to the remnant in the day of the Lord, when they will be regathered.

3. The Judgment of Moab and Ammon: Verses 8-10. Moab and Ammon had sinned against Israel, they reviled them and magnified themselves against their border. Their judgment is announced, as it is in the former prophets, like Joel, Amos, and Ezekiel. Moab will be overthrown like Sodom, and Ammon will become like Gomorrah. Then when the judgment of Moab and Ammon finally takes place, as it will in His day, the remnant of His people shall spoil them, and the remnant shall possess them. It is obvious this also remains to be fulfilled.

This judgment of Moab and Ammon is the harvest which their pride and self-exaltation has brought to them (verse 10).

4. The Judgment of other Nations: Verses 11-15. The Lord, in that day, will be terrible unto all these nations. The idol gods will all be abolished. In their place He alone will be worshipped (Zech. xiv). All the isles of the nations will turn in worship to Him. The Ethiopians, the African nations, will fall under the judgment. He will stretch out His hand against Assyria, the power of the north, including both the Assyrian which then was and the Assyrian of the end-time, still to come. It is evident from verse 13 that when Zephaniah penned these words Nineveh had not yet fallen. Her utter desolation is predicted by Zephaniah as it was predicted by Nahum. The fate of Nineveh announced was literally accomplished. And some day all the proud

cities of the nations, steeped in iniquity, will also fall as Nineveh was dethroned from her place of mistress of the world.

5. The Woe and Warning to Jerusalem and to His People: Chapter iii:1-8. The filthy, polluted and oppressing rity is Jerusalem. Four charges are laid against her. 1. She obeyed not the voice. 2. She received not correction. 3. She trusted not in the Lord. 4. She drew not near to her God. And because she was untrue to her God and Lord, oppressive cruelty and evil persisted. It was the outcome of her wrong attitude toward the Lord. Her leaders, the princes, were like roaring lions, devouring the prey. Her judges in oppressing the poor were like evening wolves, ferocious and destructive. How all this fits Christendom today. There is disobedience to the Lord, no faith in Him, no humiliation and no repentance. Hence the moral conditions of today.

Their prophets and priests were also corrupt, as we have learned before in the former prophets. Yet the holy and just Jehovah was in the midst of them. Yet the unjust was not ashamed, but continued in evil-doing.

Then Jehovah addresses the nation: "I have cut off nations; their towers are desolate; I have made their streets waste, that none passeth by; their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off; howsoever I punished them, they rose early, and corrupted all their doings." But they did not heed His plea. They did not take warning from what happened to other nations.

JUDGMENT AND GLORY

CHAPTER III:8-20

1. The Waiting for the End. Verse 8.
2. The Glory that Follows. 9-20

1. The Waiting for the End: Verse 8. "Therefore wait for me, saith Jehovah, for the day when I arise for the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, to assemble the

kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." This verse leads us back to the opening exhortation of this chapter. They are as a nation to wait for Him, till the day comes in which He arises to execute the judgment of the nations. It has been a long waiting. Centuries have come and gone; His earthly people have been the wanderers among the nations of the world, where they have been a byword and a curse, yet witnesses for Him also. Still they are waiting for "that day," the day which closes the times of the Gentiles, when the stone strikes the great man image and becomes a mountain filling the whole earth (Daniel ii).

2. The Glory that Follows: Verses 9-20. The opening verse of this glory section has been variously interpreted. It has been used by the "Pentecostal-delusion" as being a prophecy concerning their imagined gift of tongues restoration. In the first place it must be noticed that in the Hebrew the word people is in the plural. We read therefore this verse as follows: "For then will I turn to the nations a pure lip, that they may all call upon the name of Jehovah, to serve Him with one shoulder." Luther paraphrased this verse in the following way: "Then will I cause the nations to be preached to otherwise, with friendly lips, that they may call upon the name of the Lord." But this interpretation is not sustained by the text. It means that the nations which escaped the judgment-wrath of the day of the Lord will be converted, and as a result of their conversion they will call upon the Lord with pure lips; all idolatry will cease and all serve the Lord as one man.

While the peoples in verse 9 are the Gentiles, the suppliants in verse 10 are Jews brought back from the dispersion. They are brought back by the converted Gentiles as an offering unto the Lord (Isa. lxvi:20). When that takes place the restored nation will not have need to be ashamed for all their doings, for the Lord in infinite grace will have cleansed them from their iniquity, and now they are no longer proud and haughty, but a remnant humbled, trusting in the Lord.

The great Grace chapter in Ezekiel tells us of the conversion of this remnant (Ezek. xxxvi). They will then be a righteous nation, do no iniquity, nor speak lies. The speaking of lies, the use of deceit, is one of the traits of the Jews today, and has often been responsible for their sufferings among the Gentiles. But when that day comes the deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouth. They will feed and lie down and none shall make them afraid. They have become once more "the sheep of His pastures," gathered by the Good Shepherd. The time of singing and rejoicing has come.

"Sing, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Israel!
Be glad and rejoice
With all thy heart,
O Daughter of Jerusalem.

Jehovah has removed thy judgments;
He has cast out thine enemy;
The King of Israel, Jehovah,
Is in the midst of thee;
Thou wilt see evil not more.

In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem,
Fear not, Zion, let not thy hands be feeble.

Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee,
A mighty One who saves;
He rejoices over thee with gladness;
He rests in His love;
He rejoices over thee with singing."

What a glorious day that day will be! It will be glory for Him and glory for His people. The great prophetic song recorded by Isaiah (chapter xii) will then be heard in the midst of His redeemed people. The great Psalms of praise and worship will fill Jerusalem. Judgments are forever gone; no enemy will threaten them again. He Himself is in their midst, none other but He whom their fathers delivered once into the hands of the Gentiles, over whom they cried, "His blood be upon us and our children." He is King. The

throne of His father David is now filled. The mighty One saves, and rejoices over His redeemed people. He has the travail of His soul to the full and is satisfied.

Then He will make them a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth. Thus ends the great message of Zephaniah, the great-great-grandson of the pious King Hezekiah.

HAGGAI

The Prophet Haggai

INTRODUCTION

Between Zephaniah and Haggai is the period of the captivity of the house of Judah in Babylon. Haggai is the first of the three post-exilic prophets, though not the most prominent one, which is Zechariah.

Haggai means "My feast," or perhaps "the Festal one." Nothing is known of his personal history. He is mentioned in Ezra, chapter v:1 and vi:14. The first verse of the book which bears his name gives us the date of his prophecy. It was in the second year of Darius the king. The king is Darius Hystaspes, and the year is 520 B. C. Two months later young Zechariah began to lift up his voice likewise. It seems that Haggai's prophetic office extended over four months only. Some have concluded from chapter ii:3 that he must have known the first temple. If he saw that temple he must have been at least 80 years old, if not older, when he prophesied. But the passage upon which this supposition rests does not necessarily imply this. He was probably born in the captivity, and a young man like his greater associate Zechariah.

THE TIMES OF HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH

In order to understand the prophecies of Haggai as well as Zechariah, the history contained in the book of Ezra must be carefully studied. The reader will consult the introduction to the book of Ezra and the annotations on the different chapters.

We mention here but a few of the leading historical facts of this period. After the remnant had returned from Babylon the feasts commanded by the Law were first of all reinstituted. Then in the second year, 535 B. C., the foundations of the new temple were laid. It was a time of rejoicing and a time of sorrow. What was this second temple in comparison with the first house? (see Ezra iii:12, 13). There were tears of joy and tears of sorrow. Then the building of the temple was neglected for a time. There were two causes. The indifference, the faint-heartedness of the people, and the oppositions from the enemy. The Samaritans, a mongrel race (see Ezra iv:1, 9, 10) offered, after the foundation of the temple had been laid, to form an alliance with the Jewish remnant, and to assist them with it. When the proposal was nobly rejected they employed political means to dwarf the rebuilding of the house of the Lord, by misrepresentations at the Persian court. Their schemes, after some time, seemed to be quite successful, when in reply to their petition to Artaxerxes, 522 B. C., they were told that the building of the temple must be stopped. Artaxerxes was a pretender, known in history as Pseudo-Smerdis. During the remainder

of his reign the building was completely stopped; but it lasted about a year only. His successor, Darius Hystaspes, (521 B. C.) was more favorable to his Jewish subjects. It was then that Haggai and Zechariah urged the continuation of the building of the temple in their prophetic messages. But the slow progress in the building of the temple was not altogether chargeable to the intrigues of the Samaritans. The remnant was negligent in this matter to a great extent. During the time when the house was unfinished many Jews had used their means in erecting fine dwellings and beautifying them; they acted in a selfish, indifferent manner.

The harvest also had turned out very poor; the blessing of the Lord was lacking in all that they did, therefore the prophet spoke then and told them that all was an expression of the displeasure of the Lord in neglecting His house. "Ye have sown much and bring in little; ye eat but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" (i:6).

These were outward circumstances which led the Spirit of God to call Haggai to the prophetic office.

THE MESSAGE OF HAGGAI

The purpose of his message has been stated in the preceding paragraph. But the message goes far beyond his time, and like the former prophets, leads up to the time of glory. He speaks of the Messiah, our Lord, as the desire of all nations, and of the times when all nations shall be shaken; when another house is to be filled with the Lord's glory. This passage is quoted in Hebrews xii:26, 27, and will be more closely examined in the Annotatious. Our post-millennial brethren in their expositions have explained all these promises as being realized in the church. The second temple is, according to their views, a prophecy concerning the church. In the language of one: "He announces that the time is not far off when the privileges of Jehovah's worship shall be extended over all the earth, and that the treasures of all nations will then be brought to adorn this temple, and exalt its glory above the departed splendor of the former house, while peace and prosperity shall reign among the unnumbered worshippers." But inasmuch as none of the prophets knew anything whatever about the body of Christ, the church, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, this interpretation is incorrect. The church is the mystery which was not made known in former ages (Eph. iii). Hence Haggai did not describe the church under the term of the temple, but his prophecy reaches beyond the church-age to the day of the Lord, when all nations will be shaken, and the Lord will return and bring with Him the promised glory.

The message of Haggai is written in a very simple style, quite different

from the style of the pre-exilic prophets. He makes frequent use of interrogatives.

THE DIVISION OF HAGGAI

The two chapters contain five addresses. The first address in chapter i:1-11 is one of reproof and warning, to arouse the remnant from the apathy into which they had drifted in the building of the temple. The second address in chapter i:12-15 was made when the people responded to his appeal, assuring them of the presence of the Lord in their obedience. The third address in chapter ii:1-9 contrasts the glory of the first house with the greater glory of the second house and introduces the distinctively Messianic glory. The fourth address in chapter ii:10-19 contains moral instructions and the assurance of blessing. The last address, the conclusion of the message of Haggai, points still more prominently to the day of the Lord, when heaven and earth is to be shaken and the kingdoms of the nations will be overthrown. In the last verse, Zerubbabel, the servant of Jehovah, is a prophetic type of our Lord.

Analysis and Annotations

HAGGAI'S FIRST ADDRESS

CHAPTER I:1-11.

1. The Introduction. 1.
2. The Reproof. 2-6.
3. Consider Your Ways. 7-11.

1. The Introduction: Verse 1. Darius Hystaspes had been king one year and had entered upon the second year, 520 B. C., when, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, the Word of the Lord was given by Haggai. It was addressed to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest. Zerubbabel and Joshua were the prominent civic and religious leaders of that day. Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel (which means asking of God in prayer). Zerubbabel (sown in Babylon) was of royal seed, in direct line of descent from David. In Ezra this princely leader is called by his Persian name Sheshbazzar. In the genealogy of Luke iii:27 he is called a son of Neri, a descendant of David through his son Nathan; he is also called a son of Pedaiah. These divergent statements have been satisfactorily explained by the law of the Levirate marriage (see Deut. xxv: 10).

Joshua is mentioned several times in Zechariah. He was the first high-priest after the captivity, and is called in Ezra and Nehemiah-Jeshua, the name Joshua transcribed into Greek. He and Zerubbabel are prophetic types of our Lord as the King-Priest. Joshua was the son of Josedech (Jehozadak) the high-priest who was taken by the Babylonians into captivity (1 Chron. vi:15), and was the grandson of Seraiah, who was put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, after the capture of Jerusalem.

2. The Reproof: Verses 2-6. His message starts with the excuse which the people offered for their apathy in the

things of God. "This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." The Lord does not address them as "My people," but in a way which is deprecatory. It was an empty excuse, that His time had not yet come; in reality they were cold towards the cause of the Lord, and sought their own things in place of it. In their indifferent spirit they probably took the relation to Persia, produced by the Samaritan interference, as the ground of their opinion, that it was not the time to come and finish the task. They were an ungrateful people and should have known better. The Lord, who had announced through Isaiah that Cyrus should be born and say "Let Jerusalem be built," who raised up Cyrus, whom the prophet had named so many years before he was born; the Lord who had brought them back to the land and prospered them, would certainly give them the victory over all their enemies and make the building of the house possible. They hid behind the unreasonable excuse, it is not the time. How often the same excuse has been used by the professing people of God in our age!

Then the Lord answers them. "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste?" They had begun well, as we read in Ezra iii, when they set the altar upon its bases. But now they had departed from their endeavor; the interest in the one thing had waned, and selfish aims were substituted. They were living in luxurious houses, while His house was completely neglected, it was in a waste condition. The insincerity of their vain excuse was therefore exposed.

Then comes the exhortation to consider their ways (literally: set your heart upon your ways). Had it been profitable for them? No. Ever since they left off building His house bitter disappointment had been their lot. All their self-seeking brought them no gain, but steady loss. The Lord's blessing, given to His earthly people concerning earthly things, had been withholden. They had sown much seed; there was a scanty return. They had not been satisfied in eating or drinking. Their clothing was insufficient. The

wages they earned may have been good wages, but it was as if they put them into a bag with holes; the greater part of them was lost. While all this must be considered on the ground of the Jew, the principle nevertheless holds good for us as well. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi:33), also refers primarily to the believing Jew, yet it has its application for us. The heart of the believer must always seek Him first. The life of a child of God must always be devoted to Him and the things of God. Our business is to care for His things; His gracious business is to care for us in all things. Neglect of the things of God always brings the same bitter disappointment.

3. Consider your Ways: Verses 7-11. Consider your ways; the Lord spoke again. And now He commands them to go to the mountains and fetch wood and to build the house. He declares that He will take pleasure in it and that He will be glorified. How graciously He craves the whole-heartedness of His people and their full devotion to Himself. It is in worship, indicated by the building of the house, that we glorify Him. It is worshippers the Father seeketh, worshippers in Spirit and in Truth (John iv).

On account of their neglect, neglect of Himself and the honor of His Name, as centered in the house, He could not give the blessing He is so willing to bestow upon His people. He withheld the dew and the rain; He prevented the fruitfulness of the fields, and all else was stunted, on account of their attitude toward Him.

"It was Jehovah who blighted their selfish efforts. He was dealing with them on account of their unbelief and neglect. It was not because He loved them not, but because He did. 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.' When the Lord allows persons to go away without rebuke, it is the sure sign that all practical bond is broken—if any bond did exist—that He now disowns them, for a time at least. Hence these very chastenings of the Jewish remnant were the proof that His eyes were still over them, and that He felt their

negligence of Him and resented—in divine faithfulness—the failure of His people in the care of His glory."*

THE SECOND ADDRESS

CHAPTER 1:12-15

The Spirit of God carried home the burning message of rebuke, and that happened which did not happen with the generation before the captivity. They considered their ways. They took it to heart. They knew the Lord had spoken, and that He was right, the rebuke well earned. Happy are all those who act always in this way, who humble themselves and are obedient to the Lord. It is a refreshing scene which the twelfth verse records. They all united, Zerubbabel, Joshua, and all the remnant of the people. There was not one dissenting voice. They all obeyed the Lord and the words of the prophet.

"Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, spoke again in the Lord's message unto the people." It is striking how it is made prominent that he did not speak of himself, but was the Lord's messenger and brought the Lord's message. Would to God that all those who claim the dignity of a minister of the Gospel were all the Lord's messengers, and spake nothing but the Lord's message. The greatest curse in Christendom today is the man who claims to be the Lord's servant, but has no message from the Lord, for the reason that he has lost faith in the Word of God.

Another has pointed out the fact that Haggai is the one prophet who is directly called Jehovah's messenger. He is the least of the post-exilic prophets, yet the Lord puts this honor upon him. In spite of his inferior style, according to the critics, the Lord owns him by this title of distinction.

And what was his message at this time? "I am with you, saith the Lord." That is the content of the second address; just one sentence. But what a sentence it is! What assurance it brings to the heart, and how it inspires faith to action. "I am with you, saith the Lord." Such is our blessed assur-

*William Kelly.

ance. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." And as we look to Him and trust Him there is power.

The result was a mighty revival in the good work. The Lord stirred them up through His Word, the brief message He sent. Every true revival begins the same way. It has been well said, "I am with you, is the saving principle for faith in the weakest possible day, and let me add, what had they better in the brightest day?"

THE THIRD ADDRESS

CHAPTER II:1-9

Over a month later, after a good deal of work had been done, the prophet delivered his third message. He is commanded to speak to the same company, headed by Zerubbabel and Joshua; but here the remnant of the people, the exiles who had returned, is also included. If we consult Ezra iii:12 we find that many old men, who had seen the temple of Solomon, burst out in weeping when the small foundation was laid for the new temple. A similar feeling possessed the people when they resumed the temple work after Haggai's first message. In comparison with the former temple, so grand and glorious, the new temple was a feeble and insignificant affair. The prophet begins his message by asking, "Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory, and how do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes as nothing?" No doubt there was additional weeping when the prophet asked these questions.

Haggai then becomes the Prophet of Comfort and of Hope. "Yet now be strong" is in literal translation, "And now be comforted, O Zerubbabel, saith Jehovah; be comforted, Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be comforted all the people of the land, saith Jehovah; for I am with you saith the Lord of Hosts." They were discouraged on account of the smallness of their cause. It is then when the Lord delights to comfort and to cheer his trusting people. He was with His people, though now no longer a mighty host as of old, but only a small remnant; yet had He not

forgotten the Word which He covenanted with them, when He brought them out of Egypt with an outstretched arm. "My Spirit abideth among you; fear ye not." And that should be enough. His Spirit was dwelling with them to execute His work, and be their strength. The gift of the Spirit in New Testament times is something greater than this. After the finished work of our Lord and His glorification, the third Person of the Godhead came in person to indwell every member of the Body of Christ.

Verses 6-9 contain the great prophecy concerning the future. It takes us beyond the time of Haggai, past this present age, and puts before our hearts the same great and glorious day when Christ comes again, when there shall be greater glory and peace. The question is, who is the desire of all nations? It merits a closer examination, for the critics have labored to explain away the Messianic meaning of this sentence and rob it of its true meaning. For instance, Canon Driver in the "Century Bible" makes the following comment: "The desirable things of all nations shall come, i. e., their costly treasures will be brought to beautify the temple." The Hebrew is a peculiar phrase; the subject is a noun, feminine, singular; the predicate is a plural masculine. The word "Chemdath"—desire, is the same as used in Daniel xi:37, the desire of women. If literally translated it would read thus: "And the desire of all nations, they shall come." The Septuagint therefore translates it, "the choice things of all nations shall come;" others have rendered it in the following ways: "The things desired by all nations shall come," with the interpretation that it is the Gospel; "all the Gentiles shall come with their delightful things;" "the beauty of all the heathen;" "they shall come to the desire of all nations;" "with the desire of all nations;" the "choicest of all nations (that is the best of them) will come," etc. With all these suggested renderings of the difficult phrase there can be no question that it points to Christ, and must be interpreted as a great Messianic prophecy. The most ancient comments are on this line altogether. Christ is the object of the desire of all nations. This does not neces-

sarily mean that He is subjectively the desire of the nations, but He is objectively, for through Him alone the nations can be blest and receive the righteousness and peace which they need.

First, the announcement is made, "I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land." Have these convulsions been? While there have been the shakings of kingdoms in the political sense, and the earth has often been shaken physically and otherwise, this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. The Holy Spirit bears witness to it in the New Testament, for we read in Hebrews xii:26–28, "Whose voice then (at Sinai in a physical manifestation) shook the earth; but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven. And the word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved (the coming kingdom and not the church) let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." This settles the question as to the futurity of this prophecy. Critics have objected to this interpretation on account of the statement that this universal shaking is to be in "a little while." They apply it therefore to the nearer political events of that period. But the future in prophecy is often fore-shortened, and besides this, the little while is not man's little while, but God's; with Him a thousand years is as a day. Furthermore, in the political events of the times which followed the restoration of the Jews from Babylon not all nations were involved. The prophecy before us declares, "I will shake all nations;" this, too, is future. The Messiah, spoken of next as "the desire of all nations," came the first time, but His coming did not bring the blessing and the glory to nations as predicted here, nor did the promised peace come. He made peace in His sacrificial death; the foundation for "peace on earth" was then laid, as well as for the great future blessing of all the nations. But the Jews delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles,

and the Gentiles treated Him as did the Jews. In anticipation of His rejection He said, "Think not that I am come to bring peace, but the sword." Then followed the present age, unknown with its mystery, the church, to the prophets. It will close with the shaking of all nations, when the King-Messiah will appear again and bring the promised blessing to all nations. The silver and gold, which belong to the Lord, will then be brought by the nations (Isa. lx:5).

It is important to read the ninth verse in the right way, as our Authorized Version is incorrect. It does not say in the Hebrew, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former," but the Hebrew is, "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." The house of course is the temple. The visible glory dwelt once in the former house; the day is coming when there will be greater glory, the day of His glorious manifestation; then in connection with His coming and that coming restoration, He will give peace.

THE FOURTH ADDRESS

CHAPTER II:10-19

A few months later Haggai delivered another address of moral instruction and admonition. The question the prophet asks first is answered by the priests negatively. This is followed by a second question, "If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean?" This they answered affirmatively; for he that is defiled puts defilement upon everything he handles. When they had given the right answers, the prophet makes the moral application. "So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith Jehovah; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer thereon is unclean." All their works and offerings were unclean, because they were in that condition. They had to be cleansed first. Separation from evil, from that which defiles, was therefore demanded. So it is today. The order is "cease to do evil" and then "learn to do well." We are, as Christians, no less exhorted to purge ourselves,

to separate from evil, and then to become fit vessels for the Master's use.

And then the Lord challenges them to prove Him, to see if they separate from evil, are wholly for Him, how faithful He is going to be to them. "From this day," the day of a true return to the Lord followed by obedience and separation, "I will bless you."

THE FIFTH ADDRESS

CHAPTER II:20-23

The final address of Jehovah's messenger is altogether prophetic. It is addressed exclusively to Zerubbabel, the governor, a son of David. He tells the princely leader that the heavens and the earth will be shaken; it is the same as in verse 6. When that comes the throne of the kingdoms will be overthrown; the power of the kingdoms of the nations (the ten kingdoms; **Dan. ii**) will be destroyed, for in that day, the falling stone, typifying the Second Coming of Christ, will make an end of Gentile dominion. The battle of Armageddon will take place and end the military power of these nations. Zerubbabel, the son of David, is the type of Christ, the Son of David. He will then receive the throne of His father David. He will be made a signet. The signet-ring was among those nations a mark of honor. It was given by monarchs to their prime-ministers, conferring all authority upon them. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ is pictured as receiving from God the rule and authority.

ZECHARIAH

The Prophet Zechariah

INTRODUCTION

Zechariah is the great prophet of the restoration, and, as stated in the introduction to Haggai, was contemporary with him. The prophecies in both books are dated. These are as follows:

In the sixth month of Darius's second year.....Hag. chap. i
In the seventh month of the same year.....Hag. ii:1-9
In the eighth month, the same year.....Zech. i:1-6
In the ninth month, the same year.....Hag. ii:10-23
In the eleventh month, the same year.....Zech. i-vi:15
In the fourth year of Darius, ninth month.....Zech. vii-xiv

Zechariah is named in Ezra v:1 and vi:14; he was of priestly descent, which we learn by consulting Nehemiah xii:4, 16. His name means "Jehovah remembers." He was the son of Berechiah, which means "Jehovah will bless;" and his grandfather's name was Iddo; Iddo means "the appointed time." These are significant names; one might say the great prophetic message of Zechariah is given in these three names in a nutshell. For the covenant-keeping God remembers His people, which the visions and messages of Zechariah show. When He remembers them He will bless them, but it will be at the appointed time, and the appointed time has not yet come, hence the greater part of Zechariah remains unfulfilled.

He was born in Babylon, and when he returned to the land of his fathers he was a child. In his vision he is addressed as a young man, so that he was quite young when called into the responsible position of a prophet. As to the historical setting of his prophecies, it is the same as Haggai's, and we refer the reader to what we have said there.

According to ancient sources he lived to be a very old man, and was buried alongside of Haggai in Jerusalem; but this cannot be verified. Jewish tradition says that he was a member of the Great Synagogue, and took an active part in providing for the liturgical service of the new temple. The Septuagint version of the Old Testament ascribes to him the composition of Psalms cxxxvii and cxxxviii, and to Haggai and Zechariah Psalms cxlv-cxlviii; and the same do other versions like the Peshito and the Vulgate. Some expositors have been so superficial in their statements that they identified him with the Zechariah who was slain by Joash of Judah, between the temple and the altar, as mentioned in 2 Chronicles xxiv:20-23.

HIS GREAT MESSAGE

Zechariah in his message does not rebuke the people on account of

their slackness in building the house of the Lord, as we learned Haggai did, though his great prophecies were given to encourage the remnant in their work. The horizon of Zechariah's visions and prophecies is far more extended than the horizon of the other minor prophets. He covers the entire future of Israel and leads onward from his days to the time when Messiah comes to Jerusalem, when His own received Him not. He pictures the condition of the nation after the rejection of Christ, and then leads up to the time of His return and the happy results which follow the repentance of the remnant, when they shall look upon Him whom they pierced.

The Gentile world-powers, as prophetically announced in Daniel's great visions, are seen by him as domineering over Jerusalem; and how the Lord will finally deal with these powers. The last siege of Jerusalem, and what is connected with that siege, the tribulation, the deliverance by the visible coming of the Lord, and the resultant kingdom, concludes his book. It is indeed a complete prophetic history of Israel and the times of the Gentiles from the captivity to the end of these times. His book has rightly been called by the same name as the last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse—an unveiling. And there are certain features which identify Zechariah in some measure with the book of Revelation. Zechariah may well be placed alongside of Isaiah and Daniel.

THE MESSIANIC PREDICTIONS IN ZECHARIAH

Zechariah has more to say about Christ, His Person, His Work and His Glory than all the other minor prophets combined. We mention here the more direct predictions found in the book; there are others, which will be pointed out in the Annotations.

I. He speaks of Christ as "The Branch." This is one of the names of our Lord revealed to Isaiah and Jeremiah (Isa. iv:2; Jer. xxiii:5). Zechariah speaks of Him twice under this title, in chapters iii and vi.

II. A great prediction concerning Christ is found in the sixth chapter, when the prophet is commanded to order the crowning of the high-priest, symbolical of our Lord, who is the crowned King-Priest.

III. In chapter ix:9-10 we have the familiar passage quoted in the New Testament concerning Christ's entrance into Jerusalem. In this passage the first and the second coming of our Lord are blended together.

IV. He speaks of Him as the Shepherd, and the price of His betrayal, the thirty pieces of silver, also quoted in the New Testament. Chapter xi:12, 13 and Matt. xxvii:9, 10.

V. Another great Messianic prophecy is recorded in chapter xii:10. Here His death on the cross is predicted, and that He is the pierced One, on whom they shall look, on account of whom they shall yet mourn. (See John xix and Revelation i.)

VI. Still another prophecy relating to the sufferings of Christ is

chapter xiii:7. The sword is to awake against the Man, who is the fellow of God; that sword is to smite Him.

VII. Finally, we mention the passage in the last chapter, where the prophet describes Him as coming for the salvation of His waiting people, and that His feet in that day shall stand on the Mount of Olives. It is He who was seen last standing on the Mount of Olives, with the promise of His return "in like manner." As stated before, these passages are the prominent ones, but not by any means all the predictions concerning Israel's Messiah.

There is an interesting Jewish work on Zechariah, the Yalkut of Zechariah. It gives interesting comment on his prophecies. The great teacher Abarbanel confessed his inability to interpret these visions. How could he with his denials that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ? And the much honored Jewish exegete, Solomon Ben Jarchi, declared "his prophecy is very abstruse, for it contains visions resembling dreams, which want interpreting; and we shall never be able to discover the true interpretation until the teacher of righteousness arrives."

That teacher, the Holy Spirit, has come. He guides us now into all Truth; He makes plain things to come, as revealed in the prophetic Word. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, and avoiding the "private interpretation" against which Peter warns (2 Peter i) we understand the visions, which two of the greatest Hebrew scholars and teachers declared unexplainable.

The Divisions of Zechariah

For a correct understanding of the book, the correct divisions must be first of all ascertained. We give, therefore, first the scope of the book. After an introduction comprising the first six verses of the first chapter, we have the record of his great Night-visions.

1. The Vision of the Man upon the Red Horse Among the Myrtles. i:7-17.

2. The Four Horns and the Four Smiths. i:18-21.

3. The Man with the Measuring Line. Chapter ii.

4. The Vision concerning the Cleansing of the High-Priest. Chapter iii.

5. The Vision of the Candlestick with the Two Olive Trees. Chapter iv.

6. The Vision of the Flying Roll. v:1-4.

7. The Woman in the Ephah. v:5-11.

8. The Vision of the Four Chariots. vi:1-8.

Some have made ten visions out of it instead of eight; there is no need for that. The vision which they divided is the one in chapter i:18-21. But this is one vision; and so is the vision in chapter iv. After these visions had been given the young prophet was commanded to make crowns of silver and gold and crown the high-priest. It was a great symbolical action, foretelling Him, who wore on earth the crown of thorns, and who will be crowned with many crowns when the night is gone and the day breaks.

This is the first section of the book. The second section is contained in chapters vii and viii. It is a kind of parenthesis. Questions concerning certain fasts had been asked by the prophet; they were answered by the Lord and their interesting answers are recorded in these two chapters.

The third section is contained in chapters ix-xiv; it is the most majestic part of the book. It is arranged in two parts, each beginning with the phrase "The Burden of the Word of the Lord." The first Burden is chapter ix:1 and the second is chapter xii:1. It reveals in a remarkable manner the future of Jerusalem, so intensely interesting to every true beliver in our significant times. We follow this threefold division in our Analysis and Annotations.

Analysis and Annotations*

I. THE NIGHT VISIONS

Chapter i-vi:15

CHAPTER I

1. The Introduction. 1-6.
2. The First Night Vision. 7-17.
3. The Second Night Vision. 18-21.

1. The Introduction: Verses 1-6. The first utterance of Zechariah concerns the past. "The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers." They were a disobedient, stiff-necked people. The pre-exilic prophets had called them to repentance, but they did not hearken. Then he gives the message to turn to the Lord, with the promise that He will turn to them; they should not be like their fathers. And their fathers, where were they? They had passed away like the disobedient ones in the wilderness; God's judgment and displeasure had overtaken them and they perished.

2. The First Night Vision: Verses 7-17. After this opening message with its call to return, delivered probably before the assembled congregation, the prophet received his great night-visions. These were not mere dreams, but the things he describes passed before him in divine vision. He beheld them in one night. They were not only given in one night, but just as one followed the other without interval, so are they closely connected, giving progressively coming events. There is, of course, to a certain extent in some of these visions the message of hope for the Jewish remnant of that day, but the visions concern the future, and can only be understood in the light of other prophecies concerning the end of the age and the glorious future of Israel and Jerusalem. To apply them to the Church produces the greatest

*We call the attention of the reader to the author's book, "Studies in Zechariah" for a complete exegesis.

possible confusion. We shall see how these visions concern the Gentiles first and the overthrow of the world-powers, followed by the blessings and glory promised to Israel, which all will be given to the nation in the day when Gentile dominion ceases forever. When the visions end, the morning comes after that memorable night of revelation, the command to crown the high-priest is given.

Without quoting the text in full we give the interpretation of each vision. He beheld an army of riders upon different colored horses, led by a man riding a red horse, who is the center of the vision. There is an interpreting heavenly messenger, to whom the prophet turns to find out who the riders are. They do not represent the Persians, as some expositors have stated; they are angels. It is the man upon the red horse who speaks. "These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth." The riders upon the horses give their report to the man in the middle. "Behold, all the earth sitteth still and is at rest."

Who is the rider upon the red horse? He is called the "Angel of the Lord." There is no question but that the rider and the Angel of the Lord are the same person. And the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is an uncreated Being; He is the Son of God in His pre-incarnation glory. There are three very good reasons for this interpretation. 1. The color red identifies him with our Lord. He is the Lamb of God who shed His blood in redemption; He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. v) who will arise in judgment upon the nation in the coming days of vengeance and trample His enemies under foot (Isa. lxiii). 2. He is the Leader as well as the Center of the heavenly hosts; they are subject unto Him; all things are in His hands. 3. He makes intercession, which marks Him as the one who is the intercessor before God in behalf of His people. Our Larger exposition of Zechariah quotes the Jewish interpretation (Studies in Zechariah, pp. 11-12).

The report of the angelic hosts was that the earth sitteth still and is at rest. The nations were at rest, in the state of prosperity; but His people is in trouble, the land of promise

under Gentile rule and dominion. While the cities of the nations were increased and had plenty, the city of the King was under the hoof of the Gentiles; His people suffered. Such is the condition of things throughout the time of the Gentiles. In our comment, written in 1899 we made the following remarks:

"Prosperity, universal prosperity, and with it universal peace, is the cry at the close of another century, and will be more so as we advance towards the end of this age. Civilization, world conquest, commercial extension, and a universal peace, seem to be the leading thoughts among the nations of our times. Truly it is realized by some that our boasted civilization, liberty and prosperity, is nothing but a smouldering volcano which may burst open at any moment and make an end of all boasting, but the majority of the people even in Christendom are sadly deluding themselves with idle dreams. And what of God's thoughts and His eternal purposes? What of His oath-bound covenant promises? They are being misinterpreted, set aside and forgotten. Thus it will continue till the climax is reached, so clearly foretold in the second Psalm."

This forecast has come true; the great war has come and gone and now the age is rapidly approaching its predicted end.

Then follows in the vision the intercessory cry of the Angel of the Lord. It concerns in the first place the indignation of the seventy years. But that dispersion is the prophetic type of their greater dispersion. What was true then concerning the nations and the state of Jerusalem, is true of the present and future. The nations helped forward their affliction by hating the Jew. The great sin of the nations is Anti-Semitism, which is the result of not believing the Word of God. The hatred of the Gentiles will culminate in the end of the age in coming against the partially restored nation, as we shall learn at the close of our prophecy. Then the assurance is given that the Lord in His jealousy will remember His people and Jerusalem (verses 16-17). Jerusalem will be chosen and Zion comforted.

3. The Second Night Vision: Verses 18-21. He saw next four powerful horns, the emblems of the powerful Gentile nations who have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. The four horns are the same four world-powers announced in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and in Daniel's vision (Daniel ii and vii). They are symbolized by the locusts in their four stages (consult Joel i). Four smiths appear in the vision to fray them and to cast them out. The vision teaches two facts: first, the horns will be broken and cast down; and in the second place, God has for every power which has sinned against His people a corresponding instrument, to overcome and to break into pieces.

CHAPTER II

1. The Man with the Measuring Line. 1-2.
2. The Message of the Third Night Vision. 3-9.
3. The Glorious Kingdom. 10-12.

1. The Man with the Measuring Line: Verses 1-2. The third night vision is one of the coming glory. The number three stands in the Word of God for resurrection, life from the dead. Thus in Hosea, concerning Israel, "After two days Thou wilt revive us, and on the third day Thou wilt raise us up" (Hosea vi:2). In this third vision Zechariah sees the glorious restoration of Israel, which has been the burden of so many prophecies, and the glory which is connected with that restoration. In this night vision Zechariah hears of a restoration and of a glory which has never yet been fulfilled in the history of God's people. Those teachers of the Word who see in Zechariah's night visions nothing but fulfilled prophecy, cannot answer certain questions satisfactorily, and their only refuge must be a spiritualizing of this restoration. Another thought before we take up this third vision. The vision of restoration comes after the enemies of Israel have been cast down. That prophecy might be fulfilled; prophecy about a believing, suffering Jewish remnant; prophecy concerning Jacob's trouble, etc., a mock restoration, generally termed a restoration in unbelief, is to take place. There can be no doubt whatever that we are

privileged to see the beginning of this restoration of part of the Jewish nation to the land of the fathers in unbelief. It is one of the signs of the nearness of that event for which the Church hopes, prays and waits: "our gathering together unto Him." The world and the lukewarm Christian does not see it, but he who loves the Word and lives in the Word, has eyes to see and a hearing ear, and knows what is soon coming. The true restoration, however, will only come as it is seen so clearly in these night visions after the enemies have been overcome, the horns cast down, the image smashed —in other words, after the Lord has come.

First stands the man with the measuring line. He is to bear witness to the coming enlargement of Jerusalem. Similar visions where measuring takes place are found in Ezekiel xli, where the future temple is measured, and in Revelation xi a reed is given to John to measure the temple of God, which is the temple erected by the Jews in unbelief during the tribulation period. Here it is the measuring of the city.

2. The Message of the Third Night Vision: Verses 3-9. The angel who had talked with Zechariah was met by another angel. He brings the message to Zechariah, who is addressed as "this young man." The coming restoration and enlargement of Jerusalem is announced. The city is to be inhabited as villages, which denotes the peace and safety which Jerusalem will enjoy in the day of her true restoration. It will be the temptation for the enemy, Gog and Magog, to invade the land (see Ezek. xxxviii and xxxix). The invasion of Gog and Magog in Revelation xx is after the Millennium; the one in Ezekiel is in the beginning of the Millennium. Then Zechariah hears in the message that the Lord will be Himself a wall of fire unto Jerusalem; He will be the Glory in the midst of her. Glory and defence are combined, they always go together (Isa. iv). This was not the case in the restored Jerusalem after the captivity. It is altogether future. What a glory it will be when every eye sees Him, when His visible glory will be once more established in the land, from which its knowledge spreads over the earth till

it covers all, like the waters cover the deep! (Habakkuk ii:14). Then they are summoned to return from the land of the North. Millions of Jews are living and suffering in the great land of the North, Russia. In that day they will return to the old homeland. They will escape out of the clutches of Babylon, the final Babylon. He calls the believing remnant the "apple of His eye." He will guard and keep them.

3. The Glorious Kingdom: Verses 10-12. The singing times have come (see Zeph. iii). Zion rejoices for He dwells in their midst (Isa. xii). Then the nations are joined to the Lord in that day, not to the Church, for the true Church is in Glory, but they will be joined to Israel in the kingdom. The third vision closes with an exhortation similar to the one in Habakkuk ii. All flesh is to be silent before the Lord. Now is the time when God is silent. The flesh speaks now, for it is man's day. But our God shall come and not keep silent (Psa. lx). Then all the flesh, with its fruits, will have to be silent before Him in that day.

CHAPTER III

1. The Fourth Night Vision. 1-5.
2. The Message of the Vision. 6-10.

1. The Fourth Night Vision: Verses 1-5. The fourth vision is like the first and second, closely connected with the foregoing one. It gives the crowning event of Israel's restoration. The prophet recognizes in the figure, which is seen by him, Joshua the high priest, who is standing before the angel of the Lord, while at his right hand stands Satan to oppose him. Joshua was not clothed with his clean, priestly robes, but he wears filthy garments. Jehovah rebukes Satan and terms Jerusalem a brand plucked from the fire. After the accuser is rebuked, the filthy garments of the high priest are removed, his iniquity is forgiven, and he is clothed with festal raiment. The prophet is so carried away with the vision that he asks that a clean mitre is to be put upon his head. And now, after the high priest is thus clothed, the

angel of the Lord charges him with an important message: If thou wilt walk in My ways and keep My charge, thou shalt judge my house and also keep My courts. I will give thee access among those standing here, etc. The servant —the branch—is promised, and the stone which is laid before Joshua is to have seven eyes. The iniquity of this land is to be removed in one day, and the vision closes with the peaceful scene, every man inviting his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.

The high-priest Joshua in this vision stands as a type of the sinful nation and her priestly calling. Like Joshua in filthy garments, the nation is unclean and defiled. Yet in spite of his filthy garments Joshua was still the high-priest. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance; Israel, in the purposes of God, is still the priest. In the vision Satan is seen, true to his name, the accuser.

He is the enemy of Israel. He has tried in the past to hurt and to destroy the nation of destiny. He knows the purposes of God concerning Israel better than many a learned doctor of divinity, and therefore, he has opposed that people and opposes them still. His opposition has been mostly through nations. How much could be said on this topic! The end of this age will reveal the enemy of Israel, the adversary, as never before in the history of the world. There is to be war in heaven; Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred, and his angels, and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old Serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the Deceiver of the whole world, he was cast down to the earth and his angels were cast down with him (Rev. xii:7-9). His wrath will be directed against Israel and Jerusalem. It is the time of which Daniel spoke. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time (Dan. xii:1)." Once more Satan will try to destroy the people, but the Lord shall rebuke him. Israel will be

again, as so often before, like a brand plucked out of the fire. So it has been in the past. Way back when Israel was in Egypt and God was about to send the deliverer, He called Moses from out of the burning bush—Israel's true type, burning, but never consumed. Oh, how the fire of persecution and adversity has been raging, but again and again the hand of God snatched the burning brand out of the fire at the right moment. The Lord who hath chosen Jerusalem will rebuke Satan. This has not yet come. The coming Lord will commission an angel out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he will lay hold on the dragon—the old Serpent which is the Devil and Satan—and bind him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss and shut it and seal it over him (Rev. xx:1, 2). Then follows the cleansing of Israel and the new charge, all so clearly given in this vision.

The filthy garments are removed by those that stand before the angel of the Lord. The iniquity is taken away, and in place of the filthy garments there is the rich apparel and the fair mitre upon the head. How blessedly all this is waiting for its fulfillment in Israel's regeneration! When He appears after the times of overturning, He whose right it is, His people Israel will be found by Him in true penitence, acknowledging their offence. It will be a national repentance, a mourning on account of Him, which Zechariah describes in detail in the twelfth chapter.

2. The Message of the Vision: Verses 6-10. Israel was disobedient and did not keep the first charge. It is now repeated, and gives Israel's future calling after their cleansing. It will be threefold. 1. Judging in the house of the Lord, and from there ruling and judging nations, for Israel will be the head of the nations. The Church will then not be on earth, but occupy her glorious place in the New Jerusalem above the earth. 2. Israel will keep His courts. That is, Israel will attend to the Millennial Temple, which will become the house of prayer for all nations, which all the former temples were not. 3. Israel will have places to walk amongst those who stand by, that is, among the nations,

in priestly ministry. The saved remnant will then be "men which are a wonder," the miracles of His Grace and Power. Then the servant, the Branch is announced; a definite Messianic prediction. The stone engraven, with seven eyes upon it, must also mean the redeemed nation, the foundation of the kingdom, filled with His Spirit, for we read in connection with it, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." A picture of the conditions of peace and prosperity in the kingdom concludes the fourth night vision.

CHAPTER IV

1. The Fifth Night Vision. 1-10.
2. The Questions of the Prophet Answered. 11-14.

1. The Fifth Night Vision: Verses 1-10. There was a rest for the prophet between the fourth and fifth night vision. He had fallen into a deep sleep. He may have been overcome by the grand and important visions, and is now awakened by the angel with the question, "What seest thou?" The new vision is a very striking one. A golden candlestick appears before the seer. An oil receiver is seen on top, from which the oil flows to the seven lamps of the candlestick through seven pipes. Two olive trees stand alongside of the candlestick and hang their fruit-laden branches over the golden bowl, filling it with oil, which flows through the seven pipes into the seven lamps. The question of the prophet, "What are these, my Lord?" is answered by the angel with this statement, "This is the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might and not by power but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, oh great mountain, before Zerubbabel? Be a plain! He shall bring forth the topstone with shoutings of grace, grace unto it. The hands of Zerubbabel who have laid the foundation shall also finish it, and they shall rejoice and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel—even the seven. The eyes of the Lord shall run to and fro through the entire earth."

The Church in the New Testament is typined by a candlestick. The oil is the emblem of the Holy Spirit. But this is not in view in this vision.

We call attention to the fact that the vision is one which speaks of perfection, completion, fullness. The perfect and divine number seven is found three times in the vision, seven lamps, seven pipes and seven eyes. The seven lamps are united to one stem, this is union, and above it, is a golden bowl. The Spirit conquers, and not power or might does it, but His power. The great mountain becomes a plain. The topstone is brought forth and crowns the building which is finished by Zerubbabel. Shoutings, "Grace, grace, unto it," are heard, and the seven eyes run to and fro the whole earth. It is a vision of fullness and accomplishment. The candlestick shines and sheds its glorious light, its pure gold glitters and reflects the light of the seven lamps. The bowl is filled with oil, and the two olive trees give a continual supply. The high mountain removed, the temple finished, joy and victory abound. The candlestick in the vision is exactly like the one in the tabernacle, only the two olive trees are something new. The candlestick in the tabernacle represents Christ, the Light of the world, and is likewise a type of the Jewish theocracy. Theocracy, the government of this earth by the immediate direction of God, is once to be established, and when it is, it will be like a bright and glorious candlestick shedding light and dispersing the darkness. We think the *Yalkut* on Zechariah (a Hebrew commentary), is not so very far out of the way when it says, "the golden candlestick is Israel." It seems to us very clear that the vision represents the Jewish theocracy restored, Israel in their glorious inheritance as the light of the world.

2. The Questions of the Prophet Answered: Verses 11-14. The prophet asks two questions concerning the two olive trees and the branches which give the oil through the golden pipe. The two olive trees, filled with the supply of the Spirit, are in all probability the two witnesses of Revelation xi. Their testimony is given during the second half of the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles, Daniel's seventieth week (see Dan. ix). It is the time of the great tribulation and these two witnesses stand in close relation

with the establishment of the kingdom. See Annotations on Revelation.

CHAPTER V

1. The Sixth Vision. 1-4.
2. The Seventh Vision. 5-11.

1. The Sixth Vision: Verses 1-4. The three remaining night visions are of a different character. The first visions the prophet had were visions of comfort for Jerusalem and the dispersed nation, the overthrow of Babylon and all their enemies, divine forgiveness and the theocracy restored. Now follow the last three visions, and these are visions of judgment. Judgment precedes Israel's restoration, and is very prominently connected with it.

The sixth night vision is the one of the flying roll. The prophet's eyes seem to have been closed after the fifth vision, for we read, "And I lifted up my eyes again." The flying roll he sees is twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad. The interpreting angel tells the prophet that it is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole land; for every one that stealeth shall be cut off on this side according to it, and every one that sweareth shall be cut off on that side according to it. The Lord of hosts has brought it forth and it is to enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth by His Name to a falsehood, and it shall lodge in the midst of His house and consume it, both its wood and its stone.

That this vision means judgment is evident at the first glance. Ezekiel had a similar vision. "And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe (Ezek. ii:9, 10)." Ezekiel was to eat that book. This reminds us at once of the books in Revelation (chapters v and x), which are likewise connected with God's judgments in the earth. The flying roll is written on both sides, signifying the two tables of stone, the law of God. Stealing and swearing falsely are mentioned because

the one is found on the one side of the two tables of stone, and the other on the other side. However, it is no longer "Thou shalt not," but on the flying roll are written the curses, the awful curses against the trangressors of God's law which are now about to be put into execution. The curse is found in its awful details, as it refers to an apostate people in Deuteronomy xxvii and xxviii. The roll is of immense size, and on it are the dreadful curses of an angry God. The vision must have been one of exceeding great terror. Imagine a roll, probably illumined at night with fire, moving over the heavens, and on it the curses of an eternal God—wherever it moves its awful message is seen; nothing is hid from its awe-inspiring presence. It reminds one of the fiery handwriting on the wall in the king's palace. Surely such an awful judgment is coming by and by, when our God will keep silence no longer. One of the sublimest judgment Psalms, the fiftieth, mentions something similar to this flying roll. "When thou sawest a *thief*, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speaketh against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes" (Psalm 1:18-21). The flying roll stands undoubtedly in connection with wickedness, theft, and false swearing, as it is found in so many forms in unbelieving Israel, but it finds also a large application in the judgment of wickedness throughout the earth in the glorious day of His appearing.

2. The Seventh Vision: Verses 5-11. The Angel commands the prophet to lift up his eyes to behold another startling vision. What are the leading figures in the vision? An ephah—which is a Jewish measure standing here for commerce. The eyes of all the land (or earth) are upon it. Commercialism is very prominent in Revelation in connection with the full measure of wickedness, the climax of ungodliness. In Revelation xviii merchants are men-

tioned who have grown rich through the abundance of her delicacies. Then the merchants are seen weeping, for no man buys their merchandise any more. And then a long list follows, including *all the articles of modern commerce.* Compare this with the awful description of the last times in James v. Rich men are commanded to weep and howl, for miseries are come upon them. They heaped treasure together for the *last days*, and it was a heaping together by fraud, dishonesty in keeping back the hire of the laborers. They lived in pleasure (luxuriously) and were wanton. Indeed, here is that burning question of the day, capital and labor, and its final outcome, misery and judgment upon commercialism, riches heaped up, and all in wickedness. In Habakkuk ii:12 the woe of judgment of that coming glory of the Lord is pronounced upon him that buildeth a town with blood and establisheth a city by iniquity! The people are seen laboring for the fire and wearying themselves for vanity. Luxuries, increase, riches, etc., are mentioned in the second and third chapters of Isaiah, chapters of judgment. Other passages could be quoted, but these are sufficient for our purpose. They show us that the climax of wickedness as it is in the earth when judgment will come, and Israel's time commences once more, will be connected with commerce, riches and luxuries. The ephah points to this.

In the second place let us notice that in the *midst* of the ephah there is seen a *woman.* She is called wickedness. The Hebrew word wickedness is translated by the Septuagint with "*avouia*". We find that the Holy Spirit uses the same word in 2 Thess. ii:8, and then shall be revealed the wicked one (*avouia*) whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the Spirit of His mouth. The woman in the ephah personifies wickedness. She has surrounded herself with the ephah and sits in the midst of it. Have we not here the great whore having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication? Undoubtedly. This woman is the type of evil and wickedness in its highest form. Let us glance at that wonderful description of that woman in Revelation. She is the great whore sitting upon many waters.

She sits upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet decked with gold, precious stones and pearls. Upon her forehead is seen her name, Mystery, BABYLON the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations in the earth. She is drunk with the blood of the saints. The woman in the ephah represents the same great whore, Babylon the great. This becomes at once clear when we take into consideration that the woman in the ephah is carried swiftly away and a house is built for her in the land of *Shinar*, and it shall be established, and set there upon her own *base*. Now the land of Shinar is *Babylonia*.. But while in Revelation xvii the mystical Babylon is seen, in the eighteenth chapter there is another Babylon, the final great political-commercial world system; it is still future, not very far away, for we see that the trend of modern events is towards such a combination. The vision of the ephah and the woman evidently sealed up in it may denote the overthrow and judgment of the final Babylon.

CHAPTER VI

1. The Eighth Vision. 1-8.
2. The Crowning of Joshua, the High-Priest. 9-15.

1. The Eighth Vision: Verses 1-8. The last vision is the vision of the four chariots. We notice the similarity with the first night-vision. The visions opend with the hosts of heaven upon red, speckled, and white horses. It was a vision of judgment for the Gentiles and a vision of comfort to Israel. In this last vision the chariots of judgment are seen sweeping over the earth. It seems to denote judgment in its final accomplishment. The riders of the first vision may be termed the beginning of God's dealing with the nations, but the chariots put the divine judgment decrees into operation.

The riders halted in a valley amidst a myrtle grove, but the chariots rush forth to execute their terrible work from between two mountains of brass. These mountains mean undoubtedly Mount Moriah and the Mount of Olives. They

rush through the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The brass is mentioned to denote the firmness and stability of these mountains, which shall never be moved. We do not think that in the four chariots there is an allusion to the four world-powers. The judgment of them is now come. The stone is falling and smiting the image at its feet and pulverizing it, putting it completely out of existence. The chariots are God's powers, agencies for judgment in the earth, which will pass swiftly along, shown by the fast running chariots. In Rev. vi the seven seals are opened, and there go forth the four terrible riders upon white, red, black, and pale horses. The riders in the Apocalypse are the riders which go through the earth during the great tribulation, but in the eighth night vision of Zechariah we see the chariots of God's wrath. The vision falls in the time when heaven opens and He appears riding upon a white horse, His name Faithful and True, coming in righteousness to judge and to make war. Wonderful vision of Him who is clothed with a vesture dipped in blood! He is followed by the armies of heaven upon white horses, all clothed in fine linen white and clean. "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God" (Rev. xix).

The angel interprets to the prophet that the chariots are the four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord of the earth. These agencies for wrath were with God, standing before Him, the Lord of all the earth, but now at His command they descend to scatter death and destruction. They go forth in sets, and the north country and south country both so prominent in the prophetic word are mentioned. The bay horses, however, are not confined to one direction, they go through the entire earth. At last in the judgment of the land of the north the Spirit is caused to rest. The overthrow of the enemies of Israel is complete and the Spirit is quieted. How long may the wrath last and for how long may the chariots do their deadly work? Perhaps longer than we think. The millennial

reign of Christ, as foreshadowed in the bloody rule of David, followed by the peaceful reign of Solomon, may teach us lessons in this direction. The night visions have ended. They may be termed the Apocalypse of Zechariah. Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation go together in a wonderful harmony and explain each other. Alas! that just these three parts of the Bible should be so little studied and so little understood.

2. The Crowning of the High-Priest: Verses 9-15. The memorable night with its great visions was gone. The first streaks of the morning heralded the coming dawn. Then the Word of the Lord came to the young prophet commanding him to make crowns of silver and gold and crown Joshua, the High-Priest.

Some consider this to be the ninth vision of the prophet. It is, however, the Word of the Lord which comes to the prophet. There can be no doubt but the command was actually carried out and Cheldai (robust), Tobiah (God's goodness), and Jedaiah (God knows), gave their silver and gold, and crowns were made out of it and placed upon the head of Joshua the high-priest. But the action had a much deeper meaning. It was a highly typical one. It must have astonished Joshua and the people to hear such a command, for the royal crown did not belong to the high-priest but to the descendant of David. He must have understood that the whole command had a symbolical bearing. Joshua hears it from the Word of the Lord that another person is only typified by him, "Behold the man whose name is the Branch." It is this man the Branch who will be a priest upon the throne. This, of course, is our Lord Jesus Christ. The name of the high-priest Joshua is in itself very significant, for the meaning is, God is salvation, Saviour, Jesus. Pontius Pilate was fulfilling prophecy when he stood there leading out Jesus of Nazareth before that tumultuous multitude, and when he said "Behold the man." If the assembled Jews had known the Scriptures they would have recognized the phrase. But how did He then come forth? He wore a crown of thorns upon His meek and loving brow, and the

people gazed into the blood-stained face of the Lamb of God now ready to be placed upon the altar and slain. But once again it will sound forth, "Behold the man," for when He appears it will be after He has gathered His saints, and then He will come as the Son of Man in the heavens, and the sign of the Son of Man will be seen there. He will be crowned again, too, but not with the crown of suffering and shame, but with the crowns of glory. Thus He is seen in Revelation xix:12 as wearing many crowns.

He comes to build the temple of Jehovah, bearing majesty, sitting and ruling upon His throne. He is now the builder of the spiritual temple which is composed of living stones (Eph. ii:21; 1 Peter ii:5). But when He comes again there will be the building of another temple. It is now no longer His Father's throne but His own, upon which He is a priest as well. The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords has now taken possession of His inheritance. The times of overturning are over and He whose right it is has come. There is a very instructive thought in the fact that the persons of the exile, as mentioned above, were to bring the silver and the gold out of which the crowns were to be made. The time will come when the whole exiled nation, so long scattered and peeled, though even in dispersion, the richest nation of the earth, will bring their silver and gold, their glory and their all and lay it at the feet of the King.

II. QUESTIONS CONCERNING CERTAIN FASTS

Chapters vii-viii

CHAPTER VII

1. The Question. 1-3.
2. The Reproof. 4-7.
3. The Lessons of the Past. 8-14.

1. The Question: Verses 1-3. Nearly two years had passed since Zechariah's great visions, and during that time the people had been obedient to the vision and built the house. Soon the ancient worship was to be resumed. A question arose in the minds of the people concerning certain Jewish days of fasting. The principal day was the day set apart in memory of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. It was kept on the ninth day of the fifth month (the ninth of Ab, still kept by the Jews). The question came to the prophet through two men who bear foreign names—Sherezer (Prince of the Treasury) and Regemelech (the official of the King). The question was, "Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these many years?" They had wept in Babylon on that day (see Psalm cxxxvii.)

2. The Reproof: Verses 4-7. The word of the Lord comes now to the prophet. The message is for all the people and for the priests. The two fasts are mentioned. The one in the fifth month as already stated was the one in remembrance of the destruction of the city. The fast of the seventh month was kept on the anniversary of the murder of Gedaliah at Mizpah (Jeremiah xli). But why did they keep these fast days? Why do they keep these days indeed still? The Lord asks, "Is it unto me, unto me?" No, it was not for the honor and glory of God, but their own selfish interests were at the bottom of it. Indeed God had never asked them to fast. These institutions were man-made, and highly displeasing to Jehovah. And is it not so now, not alone with the Jews but with Christendom? Oh, the man-made institutions and outward observances which only dishonor God and are for the selfish interests of the people! The

eating and drinking, the fast being over, was not unto the Lord, but unto themselves. It was obedience the Lord required. Had they listened to the words spoken by the prophets they would not have been in captivity, there would have been no need for a solemn fast. Unbelief was at the bottom of it all, and so it is still with the nation in dispersion.

3. The Lessons of the Past: Verses 8-14. Here are moral lessons and instructions. They were to execute true judgment, show mercy and compassion, oppress not the widow nor the fatherless, the poor or the stranger. These were His demands in the past, but their fathers did not listen, and as a result the judgment of the Lord came upon them and they were scattered with a whirlwind. History has repeated itself. What happened in the past happened again.

CHAPTER VIII

1. The Restoration Announced. 1-3.
2. The Peace of Jerusalem. 4-5.
3. The Return to the Land. 6-8.
4. The Blessing of the Land and the People. 9-23.

1. The Restoration Announced: Verses 1-3. The answer is now given to the question, and it is an answer which none of the petitioners expected. The answer is closely linked with the third night vision in chapter ii, for here is an enlarged prophecy concerning the restoration of Jerusalem. Jehovah was jealous for Jerusalem. The wrath fell upon the Gentiles and He poured out His fury upon them (which of course is future). When that has taken place He returns unto Zion and establishes His dwelling place in the midst of His people. Then Jerusalem is no longer trodden down by the Gentiles. Her name is a new name, "the City of Truth." How different from the other names she bore in her humiliation! She was called an unclean woman (Lam. i:8, 17); a harlot and a murderer (Isa. i:21); Sodom and Egypt (Rev. xi).

2. The Peace of Jerusalem: Verses 4-5. The misery of Jerusalem was great while under judgment. All will be changed "in that day." The city will have peace and prosperity and be largely inhabited. Hence there will be no

more need to weep over her past fate and desolation, for greater glory has come.

3. The Return to the Land: Verses 6-8. They all return to the land. In the second chapter the North country was mentioned (Russia); and their return announced. Here the East and the West are named, the far East, India, China, Japan; and the West, the European countries and America.

4. The Blessing of the Land and the People: Verses 9-23. What a contrast with the former days of judgment and dispersion and misery! For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast. . . . Little fruit was had from the ground; there was nothing for man and beast. . . . Neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in on account of the affliction. . . . There was no rest, no peace, but uncertainty and affliction. Those that went out from the land had no peace, and they that came into the land found no peace. The curse said, No rest for the sole of their feet, and how literally it has been fulfilled. Again the people seek a resting place in the land without their God and their Saviour, all in the confidence of the flesh. They will succeed in their restoration plans only to find themselves at last in greater difficulties and facing worse afflictions than ever before. Then every one will be against his neighbor (verse 10). Money spent by the millions in building channels for irrigation, planting of trees and vines, building railroads, etc. (just what modern Zionism proposes and has undertaken to do), may succeed in transforming the land in spots into a fruitful garden, but the time of Jacob's trouble will sweep that all away. The Lord will be gracious to the very land in the day of His manifestation. There will be a time of peace, the vine will give her fruit, the ground her increase, the heavens their dew.

The curse will then be changed into a blessing and the remnant will be a holy people. Fast days become feast days; national calamities of the past are forgotten, and in the place of weeping there is praise and worship. The Songs of Praise with which the Book of Psalms closes will undoubtedly then be sung by the restored nation. This great restoration

chapter closes with a vision of the conversion of the whole world (verses 20-23). The nations are seeking the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem to pray before Him. Then the Jew will no longer be a dishonored person among the Gentiles, but they will be the messengers of the King among the nations; and they will gladly take hold of the skirt of the Jew to be taken by him to Jerusalem.

III. THE TWO PROPHETIC BURDENS—THE GREAT PROPHECIES OF THE FUTURE

Chapters ix-xiv.

1. THE FIRST BURDEN

Chapters ix-xi.

CHAPTER IX

1. The Burden of the Land of Hadrach. 1-8.
2. Zion's King of Peace. 9-12.
3. The Near-event of the Invasion by Antiochus Epiphanes. 13-17.

1. The Burden of the Land of Hadrach: Verses 1-8. The final section of Zechariah is of still greater interest. The Deliverer, King Messiah, is revealed in this section as suffering, rejected, pierced, slain. The great finale leads us up to the great conflict and final siege of Jerusalem. We do not enter into the inventions of Criticism, which claim that these great prophecies are less authentic than the first part of Zechariah.

The land of Hadrach against which the first burden in chapter ix commences cannot be correctly located. Its close connection with Damascus and Hamath shows that the land of Hadrach must have been a province of the Syrian kingdom then in existence. The Phoenician cities Tyre and Sidon are next, and then mention is made of four Philistine cities. Against these, Syria, Phoenicia and the cities of the Philistines a great calamity and overthrow is prophesied by Zechariah. They are conquered by the hosts of an enemy, and the rich treasures of Tyre are heaped together in the streets—silver as the dust and gold as the mire—the bulwarks are smitten, and she herself consumed by fire. From there the conquest goes on rapidly to the Philistinian cities, and the King of Gaza perishes. The question arises, What conquest and calamity is this? Is it accomplished or is it still future? History records one great conqueror who rapidly overthrew the countries and cities mentioned in this burden. Alexander the Great and his expedition so success-

fully carried on is undoubtedly meant here. All students of the prophetic Scriptures know how prominently he likewise stands out in the Book of Daniel. The young monarch, after the battle of Issus, besieged and quickly captured Damascus. Sidon was easily taken, but Tyre resisted him some seven months and was burned to the ground. Gaza and the other cities came next. Thus the burden of the Word of Jehovah as uttered here by Zechariah was literally fulfilled in the Syrian conquest of Alexander the Great. However, history tells us that the armies of the youthful monarch passed by Jerusalem a number of times without doing harm to the city. This is remarkable, and in accord with the prophecy of Zechariah, for we read in the eighth verse, "And I will encamp against mine house, against the army, against him that passes through and returns, and no oppressor shall come over them any more, for now I have seen it with mine eyes."

But this prophetic burden leads us up also to the final days, for we read here the promise that "no oppressor shall come over them any more." This brings it in connection with the final coming deliverance of Israel, and the final destructive visitation upon their enemies.

2. Zion's King of Peace: Verses 9-17. A great prophecy follows. The true King of Israel comes here before us in His humiliation, and coming exaltation.

"Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion,
Shout aloud, daughter of Jerusalem;
Behold thy king cometh to thee,
Just and having salvation;
Meek and riding upon an ass,
Even upon a colt, the she-ass's foal;
And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,
And the horse from Jerusalem,
And the battle bow shall be cut off,
And He shall speak peace unto the nations,
And His dominion shall be from sea to sea,
And from the river to the ends of the earth.
As for thee also, for the sake of thy covenant blood,
I send forth thy prisoners from the waterless pit,
Return to the stronghold—Prisoners of hope
Even today I declare I will render double unto thee."

This stands in contrast to the Grecian conqueror, and it needs no proofs that the coming King whom Zechariah beholds is the King Messiah. The Jews acknowledge it as such. One of the greatest Jewish commentators (Rashi) says: It is impossible to interpret it of any other than King Messiah. An interesting fable is based upon this prophecy, and well known among orthodox Jews. Rabbi Eliezer says, commenting on the words lowly and riding upon an ass, "This is the ass, the foal of that she-ass which was created in the twilight. This is the ass which Abraham our father saddled for the binding of Isaac his son. This is the ass upon which Moses our teacher rode when he came to Egypt, as it is said, And he made them ride upon the ass (Exod. iv:20). This is the ass upon which the Son of David shall ride." Other interesting quotations could be given from Jewish writings, but this is sufficient to show that the Jews believe it to be a Messianic prophecy. And what blindness that they do not see Him who is the Messiah; but is not the so-called "higher criticism" existing today in Christendom being taught in churches and schools, that there are no Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, much greater blindness? Alas! so it is, and the outcome can be nothing else in the end than the denial of the divinity of our Lord, or Unitarianism.

Every reader of the New Testament knows that this prophecy is quoted in the Gospels. In the Gospel of Matthew we read (chapter xxi:5): "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, upon a colt the foal of an ass." The context shows a great multitude crying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. But soon the cry is changed unto, This is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee. Notice the Holy Spirit quoting from Zechariah leaves out the sentence, "*He is just, having salvation.*" This is not an error, but it is the divine right of the Spirit who gave the prophecies in olden times to apply them correctly

in the New Testament. In the Gospel of Mark in the eleventh chapter there is likewise the description of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, but Zechariah is not quoted. The same is true of the account given by Luke, chapter xix, and here He is mentioned as the King that cometh in the name of Jehovah, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. In the fourth Gospel, chapter xii:15, the account of His coming to Jerusalem is much shorter than in the other Gospels. It says there, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, thy King cometh, sitting upon an ass's colt."

We see from this that the four Gospels give each an account of the entry of the Lord into Jerusalem; two of them quote from Zechariah and the other two do not. The quotations themselves are different from the prophecy in Zechariah ix in two respects. The first words, Rejoice greatly, is not at all used. In Matthew it is, Tell the daughter of Zion, and in John, Fear not, daughter of Zion. The sentence, He is just and having salvation, is left out in both.

A superficial exposition of the Word claims that Zechariah's prophecy was fulfilled in the event recorded by the Gospels. As far as His entry into Jerusalem is concerned, riding upon the colt the foal of an ass (and note in Matthew it is shown that both the colt and the ass are brought to Him. He could ride, of course, only upon one, but the she-ass had to go along in fulfillment of prophecy), and the way He came, meekly, in this respect the prophecy was fulfilled. This entry of the Son of Man into Jerusalem was His formal presentation to Jerusalem as its King, but, as stated above, the Messianic cry of welcome, Blessed is He, soon changed into, Jesus the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee, and that again in the final cry of rejection, Crucify Him, crucify Him! There was no salvation for Israel then, and no kingdom for Him, hence no rejoicing is mentioned in the quotations.

It is His second coming to Jerusalem as the Son of Man in His glory which will bring the fulfillment of Zechariah ix:9-11. True, the colt, the she ass's foal, will not be the animal He rides, but He will come upon a white horse followed by the armies of heaven. He comes then truly for Jerusalem, ful-

filling the prophecy, "Just is He having salvation" (marginal reading, Victory). There will be again the welcome cry of the cxviii Psalm, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah," preceded by the plea, "Hosanna, save now."

The tenth and eleventh verses show clearly that the prophecy is yet to be fulfilled and can be only fulfilled in the coming of the Son of Man in His glory. One of the reasons why modern Judaism rejects Jesus of Nazareth, and does not believe Him to be the promised Redeemer, is in this prophecy. Rabbi F. De Sola Mendes, of New York, brings in a little book, "A Hebrew's Reply to the Missionaries," the following argument: "We reject Jesus of Nazareth as our Messiah on account of His deeds. He says of Himself: 'Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace but a sword,' etc. But we find that our prophets ascribe to the true Messiah quite different actions. Zechariah says (ix:10), He shall speak peace to the nations. Jesus says He came to send the sword on the earth; whereas, Isaiah says of the true Messianic time, 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not life up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.'"

Of course the Jew is right in expecting the literal fulfillment of this prophecy, and it will be fulfilled when He comes again and the restoration of all things will follow, as spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets.

When He appears again, in like manner as He went into heaven, that is not for His saints but with His saints, there will be peace for Ephraim and for Jerusalem, and the kingdom is then restored to Israel, that is, to the house of Judah and the house of Israel. The chariot, the horse, and the battlebow will be cut off.

Not alone will He bring peace to the covenant people but to the nations. He will speak peace. "And He shall stand, and shall feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah His God, and they shall abide; for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be our peace" (Micah v:4, 5). There

will be abundance of peace (Psa. lxxii:7). His dominion will be from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth.

The prisoners of hope to be released, by the blood of the covenant, from the pit wherein there is no water, is the nation whose captivity is now ended. How strange that people should take a passage like this and interpret it as meaning the restitution of the wicked and the ungodly from the pit. There is nothing taught in the Word like that which some people term a larger hope. The restitution (restoration) of all things is not left to the fanciful interpretation of the human mind, but is clearly defined by the Word itself, as spoken by the prophets. In the vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel xxxvii, Israel's complaint is, Our hope is lost. But when He is manifested, who is indeed the Hope of Israel, the prisoners (the captives), will be released and cleansed. "Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears, . . . there is hope for thy latter end, saith the Lord, and thy children shall come again to their own border" (Jer. xxxi:17). The exhortation to return to the stronghold follows. Israel will then sing, "He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (Psa. xl:2). Double will be rendered unto them, as promised. "Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Isa. xl:2). "For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in that portion; therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be unto them" (Isa. lxi:7).

3. The Near-Event of the Invasion by Antiochus Epiphanes: Verses 12-17. The scene changes once more. One of Alexander's successors, Antiochus Epiphanes, and the Maccabean victory is the topic of these verses. On this invader see Daniel viii, where he is predicted as the little horn and his abominable work there is fully described. He entered "the pleasant land," the land of Israel. A bitter struggle commenced, for Antiochus tried to exterminate the

Jews, and their religion as well. Every observance of the Jewish religion was forbidden, the Sabbath had to be profaned, and unclean food had to be eaten. Idols were set up in the temple. Instead of the Jewish feasts, the feasts of idols, with all their shocking abominations and immoralities, were introduced, and the Jews were forced to join in them. Thousands suffered martyrdom. But all at once a few people stood up against the abominations, the Maccabeans, and in a struggle lasting about twenty-five years, they fought successfully against the enemies.

This terrible visitation of the land and the wonderful victory of the Maccabeans are foretold by the prophet in the closing verses of the ninth chapter. We will quote the passage:

> "I bend for me Judah and fill the bow with Ephraim,
> And I will stir up thy sons, Zion, against thy sons, Greece,
> And make thee like the sword of a mighty man.
> Jehovah shall be seen over them,
> And His arrow shall go forth like lightning,
> And the Lord Jehovah shall blow the trumpet.
> He shall go with whirlwinds of the South.
> The Lord of Hosts shall cover them;
> They shall devour and tread down slingstones,
> And they drink and make a noise as from wine,
> And they shall be filled like bowls, as the corners of the altar.
> And Jehovah their God saves them in that day, as the
> flock of His people;
> For jewels of a crown shall they be, glittering over His land,
> For how great is His goodness and how great His beauty!
> Corn shall make the young men flourish, and new wine
> maidens."

But again we have to remark that this prophecy is only partially fulfilled. The terrible tribulation of the land of Judah when Antiochus Epiphanes invaded the land is but a type of the great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble. The remnant of Israel will then be victorious. Thus everything is seen in this chapter in a past fulfillment, but only partial, and in it a future fulfillment, which will be complete.

We cannot leave this chapter without calling attention to the blessed statement:

"For jewels of a crown they shall be, glittering over His land."

The slain who suffered martyrdom are meant, and all those who fought for Jehovah's name and honor. May not the statement in Hebrews xi refer to this time? "Others had trials of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins: being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated, of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts and in mountains and caves and the holes of the earth" (Heb. xi:36-38).

And all will find a repetition during the coming tribulation, But the time for reward has not yet come. The throne of glory is not yet revealed, and the jewels, the saints made up in a crown, glittering over the land, are not yet seen. But the assurance is given, "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels" (Mal. iii:17).

The first verse of the next chapter is misplaced; it belongs to the close of chapter ix. When the time of blessing comes, the latter rain will fall upon the land and produce the promised fruitfulness.

CHAPTER X:2-12

1. The Apostasy of Israel in the Last Days. 2-4.
2. The Victory over the Enemies. 5-7.
3. Deliverance and Restoration. 8-12.

1. The Apostasy of Israel in the Last Days: Verses 2-4. Idolatry was the great sin of both Judah and Israel. They practised the occult things of heathendom and worshipped their false gods; they had teraphim used for divination. On account of this the wrath fell upon the former generations, and the Lord's anger was kindled against their leaders, the shepherds, and they were dispersed. We have called attention before to Matthew xii:43-45, the passage in which the Lord Jesus announces that the unbelieving part of the nation will return in the last days to the unclean spirit of idolatry, only in a worse form than before. Many of the

unbelievers amongst the Jews in our days turn to the witchery of Christian Science; they adopt also that Satanic system known as Spiritism. But the apostates will go beyond that. They will finally accept the Devil's master production, the Man of Sin, and worship him (2 Thess. ii; Rev. xiii; Dan. ix:27). Then the Lord will punish these goats. At the same time there is a remnant which will stand aside from these future idolatries; they will fear the Lord and not enter into a covenant with the Beast (see annotations Daniel ix:27). The second half of the third verse in this chapter belongs to this remnant: "The Lord of hosts visits His flock, the house of Judah, and makes it like His state-horse in the war." He will use them and finally deliver them.

The fourth verse is of much interest. "From him will be the cornerstone, from him the nail, from him the battle-bow, from him every ruler goeth forth at once" (corrected translation). The nail in the Oriental house is a large pin, often very beautifully ornamented, and the most costly things are hanged thereupon. "And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house" (Isa. xxii:23, 24). The Shemoth rabbah, a Jewish interpretation, says on this verse, "this is King David; as it is said, the stone which the builders rejected is become the chief cornerstone." Some say it is spoken concerning the Lord, that He is the cornerstone and the nail. It refers to Him, no doubt, but what is spoken of Him finds also a fulfillment in restored Israel. Thus Israel is yet to be the cornerstone upon which everything rests in the earth, and the nail upon which hangs the glory.

2. The Victory over the Enemies: Verses 5-7. The great final victory is announced in this section. They shall fight and conquer, for the Lord of hosts is with them as of old. They will be saved out of the time of Jacob's trouble, "For I have mercy upon them; and they shall be as though I had not cast them off; for I am the Lord their God, and I will hear them." Ephraim will be there, the restored ten tribes.

3. Deliverance and Restoration: Verses 8-12. They will

be delivered in that day, redeemed and restored. Let us notice that the eleventh verse must be applied to the Lord. He is with them in the sea of affliction, as He was with them in Egypt and went before them in the pillar of cloud.

CHAPTER XI

1. The Judgment of the Land; the Temple and the Slaughter of the Flock. 1-6.
2. The True Shepherd Set Aside and Rejected. 7-14.
3. The Foolish Shepherd. 15-17.

1. The Judgment of the Land; the Temple, and the Slaughter of the Flock: Verses 1-6. This chapter presents a dark prophetic picture. We have seen in the preceding chapters the blessings and mercies in store for the Israel of the future. The visions and prophecies have revealed their national and spiritual restoration, the overthrow of their enemies, the destruction of the world-powers, the establishment of the theocracy and the blessings of the kingdom. What precedes this coming glory is now more fully unfolded, and the rejection of the Shepherd of Israel is predicted. The first six verses concern the judgment as the result of that rejection. For a complete exposition see our "Studies in Zechariah," where we also give the interesting Jewish comments on this passage. They apply it mostly to the destruction of the Temple.

The correct interpretation is that it includes all the devastation of the land, the burning of the temple, the slaughter of the flock, the spoiling of the shepherds, the Jewish leaders and the complete overthrow of the land and of the people. How awful the fulfillment of the prophecy has been! The Lord's voice, full of tears cried, long after Zechariah's mournful vision, "If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes! For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another."

The measure was full. After terrible wars amongst themselves, the fire advanced in the direction from Lebanon, in the form of the Roman army full of vengeance, spreading ruin and misery wherever they went, till after a long and dreadful siege Jerusalem fell, the temple was burnt, and over a million human beings were slain. Not one stone was left upon another. Up to now this judgment has been the most appalling, the tribulation then the greatest; but there is another tribulation coming of which the former destruction of Jerusalem is but a faint type, and that tribulation which is even now so close at hand will find a climax in the day of wrath, the day of vengeance of our God. The next verses (4-6) speak of the flock of slaughter and the last attempt divine love made to save the doomed nation.

2. The True Shepherd Rejected: Verses 7-14. The prophet acts again symbolically in taking two staves, one called Beauty, the other Bands. Much has been written on this interesting but difficult passage. The first sentence speaks of divine love. The true Shepherd came, the Messiah, and He fed the flock of slaughter, the poor of the flock. He looked on the multitudes and was moved with compassion, for they were scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. The prophet as representing the true Shepherd has two staves. The one is named Beauty; or, as we read in the margin, graciousness. The second one is named Bands. The Shepherd carries a staff to protect and to guide His flock. God's Mercy and Favor are clearly indicated in these two staves. The first one, Beauty, which is cut asunder first, and that before the wages of the Shepherd, the thirty pieces of silver, are given, stands no doubt for the gracious offer with which the King, preaching the kingdom, came among His people, to His own. He proclaimed that which prophets had spoken before, God's mercy and love, long promised, now to be carried out. He Himself had come to redeem His people and deliver them from their mighty enemies as well as from the false leaders. But the offer, the kingdom preaching, is rejected, the staff, Beauty, is cut asunder, the covenant with the peoples (Amim in Hebrew), His own, is now broken.

The kingdom is to be taken away and given to another nation. After the breaking of the staff, Beauty, there comes the giving of the wages, the thirty pieces of silver. The Shepherd who broke the staff is treated like a slave.

The second staff in His hands, Bands, speaks of union, binding together, bringing into fellowship. It typifies the priestly side of the good Shepherd who died for the flock. This staff is broken after the thirty pieces were given for Him, and cast into the temple. They cried, Away with Him! we have no King save Caesar! Crucify Him! His blood be upon us and upon our children! The cross bears the superscription, This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, and from the lips of the rejected King and Shepherd there came the prayer for His people, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. The doom came not at once upon the nation. Once more the love of the Shepherd is preached to the miserable sheep, and the remission of sins offered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it ends in rejection too; no bringing together into One followed. The foolish shepherd appears next, and after him the good Shepherd will appear again with His two staves, Beauty and Bands, kingdom and mercy, bringing and binding together. He will then be a Priest upon His throne. This interpretation is the most satisfactory one, and in harmony with the entire scope of Zechariah's visions and prophecies.

Who are the three shepherds to be cut off in one month by the Shepherd? The three shepherds are not persons, but they stand for the three classes of rulers which governed Israel, and were in that sense shepherds. We read of these shepherds in Jeremiah ii:8, priests, rulers, and prophets. The Lord likewise mentions them in Matthew xvi:21, elders, chief priests and scribes. When He came He was indeed weary with them, and denounced their hypocrisies and wickedness. They in turn hated and abhorred Him, and conspired to put Him to death. The Lord Himself cut them off. He pronounced His woes and judgments upon them, but the judgment was not at once carried out. When Jerusalem was taken, their rule came to an end and they were cut off.

But there are mentioned the wretched of the flock that gave heed unto the Shepherd, and they knew that it was the word of Jehovah. These wretched ones are the faithful ones who followed the Shepherd, the small remnant (compare with chapter xiii:7). The others who rejected the King and the Shepherd were indeed not fed, but were dying and cut off.

The wages of the good Shepherd, thirty pieces of silver, and these thrown into the house of Jehovah to the potter is to be considered next. Thirty pieces of silver was the price of a slave who had been killed. If the ox gore a man-servant or a maidservant, the owner shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver (Exodus xxi:32). Oh, what unfathomable love! The Lord from heaven became like a slave. The love He looked for He found not. It was refused to Him, and instead He was insulted, mocked, and treated like a miserable slave. There was one of the twelve who was called Judas Iscariot. He went to the chief priests and said, What are you willing to give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver (Matt. xxvi:15). The money at the command of Jehovah is thrown away by the prophet with indignation into the house of Jehovah, to the potter. Perhaps the prophet never knew the real significance of his act, but we know it from the New Testament. "Then Judas which betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is this to us? See thou to it. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury since it is the price of blood. And they took counsel and bought with them the potters' field to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called the field of blood unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was priced,

whom certain of the children of Israel did price, and they gave them for the potters' field, as the Lord appointed me" (Matt. xxvii:3-10). How striking the fulfillment. However, here is a difficulty. In Matthew it is stated that Jeremiah spoke the prophecy, and Zechariah's name is not mentioned at all. How can this be explained?

The prophecy certainly as it was fulfilled was not given by Jeremiah at all, but through Zechariah. There can be no doubt that his name should appear here instead of Jeremiah, but that Jeremiah's name is quoted must have a meaning. Let us notice that it does not say in Matthew xxvii that it was *written* by Jeremiah, but it is stated that it was *spoken* by Jeremiah. Is there anything in Jeremiah which can be linked with this prophecy? We have indeed in Jeremiah a similar action of the prophet, corresponding to Zechariah xi:13, and which is seen fulfilled in the Gospel. Read Jeremiah xviii and xix. The word "Tophet" used there means an unclean place, a burial ground. Jeremiah's name appears in Matthew's Gospel, to call attention to the fact that Jeremiah also spoke of the same event, the rejection of the true Shepherd.

3. The Foolish Shepherd: Verses 15-17. The foolish shepherd is the false Messiah, the man of sin, the son of perdition. The prophet impersonates him likewise. He no longer holds the staves of Beauty and Bands, but has the instrument of the foolish shepherd to wound and to hurt. This false Christ is the opposite from the true Christ. The true Shepherd came to seek, to save, to feed, to heal, and to gather; the false shepherd does the opposite.

The true One rejected, the nation becomes the prey of the foolish shepherds. Poor, blinded Israel! How many wicked shepherds they have had, and how often the prey of wicked leaders. False Messiahs appeared among them again and again to find strong and numerous following. Still the foolish shepherd, the last one, the very embodiment of Satan himself, the accuser, has not yet come. Forerunners there have been many. Herod was one of them, but not that man of sin, the son of perdition who will appear and be worshipped as

a God, right before the King of kings and the true Shepherd of His flock appears to slay that wicked one with the breath of His mouth and by the brightness of His coming (2 Thess. ii). The Lord said, I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive (John v:43). That one who comes in his own name has not yet come, and when at last he is here, it will be for Israel the time of greatest trouble and tribulation for all them that inhabit the earth. During the war interpretation of prophecy went to seed with some who saw in the deluded German Kaiser a fulfillment of this passage, because he had a withered arm. Such foolish inventions are deplorable, for they bring the study of prophecy into disrepute. The third section of our chapter finds its complete fulfillment in the Antichrist, the false Messiah, the beast, the little horn, the leader of the enemy, the false prince of Israel; thus the foolish shepherd is called throughout the prophetic word. The dreadful punishment will be executed upon the foolish shepherd in the day of the Lord's coming with His saints for the salvation of his people Israel.

The eleventh chapter in Zechariah is the darkest in Israel's history. The night began with their apostasy and rejection of the Lord of Glory, their own brother, their loving Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. It ends in darkness greater still under the regime of the foolish shepherd. But the morning cometh after that dark night, and Israel's sun will never set again.

THE SECOND BURDEN OF ZECHARIAH

Chapters xii-xiv

CHAPTER XII

1. Jerusalem's Conflict and Victory. 1-9.
2. The Vision of the Pierced One and its Results. 10-14.

1. Jerusalem's Conflict and Victory: Verses 1-9. The second burden begins with this chapter. It is wholly unfulfilled with the exception of the prophecy at the end of chapter xiii concerning the Shepherd who was smitten. The great future events recorded in these closing chapters of Zechariah are the following: The victory of Jerusalem, the overthrow of the hostile nations from the west (the nations which constitute the revived Roman Empire), the outpouring of the Spirit upon the remnant, the appearing and the vision of the Pierced One, the national repentance, the cleansing of the people, the invasion from the north, the appearing of Christ standing upon the Mount of Olives, the establishment of the kingdom and the glory of Jerusalem. Historically no such gathering of all nations against Jerusalem can be located. It is all prophetic, and so intensely interesting in the days we write, for these things are "about to come to pass."

> Behold, I make Jerusalem a cup of reeling
> To all the nations round about:
> Upon Judah also shall it be,
> In the siege against Jerusalem.
> And it shall come in that day, I make Jerusalem
> A burdensome stone for all the peoples;
> All that are burdened with it shall be wounded;
> All the nations of the earth shall gather against it.

This does not take place till the end of the age is reached, the end which begins after the true Church is taken to glory. Then the nations satanically blinded will form the confederacy which in prophecy is the reconstruction of the Roman Empire, seen in the second chapter of Daniel under the symbol of the two feet and ten toes, and in Daniel vii under the symbol of the ten horns with the little horn. In

Revelation xiii it is the Beast with the ten horns. The Jews will have to return first, at least a goodly number of them, and repossess the city.

In 1899 the author wrote as follows: "An exodus of Jews will take place, the land will become theirs, and the well laid plans and schemes of the present time will be carried out. Political combinations will be their chief hopes for success." This anticipated return is now a historic fact as one of the chief results of the great war. When finally the Jews think that they have reached the goal of their fleshly, unbelieving hopes, their greatest trouble begins. There is yet to appear the Beast who makes a covenant with them. But according to Daniel's great prophecy (Dan. ix) the covenant will be broken in the middle of the seventieth week. Then the Beast heads the armies of the nations to come up against the land and against Jerusalem (see Rev. xix:19). They will lay siege to the city, but the Lord announces that these nations shall be cut to pieces. It is the time when the stone strikes the feet of the prophetic image in the second chapter of Daniel, the great battle of Armageddon. Verses 4-9 describe that day. Jehovah will smite these nations and all these hostile forces will be overthrown.

Here also is given the order of how the Lord will save the remnant of His people. Those who live in tents outside the city will be saved first; Jerusalem comes next. The purpose is that the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not exalt themselves over the rest of Judah. The house of David in this vision is mentioned five times. We have the glory of the house of David in verse seven, the strength of David and the supremacy of it in verse eight. The spirit of grace and supplication is given to the house of David, and the family of the house of David will mourn. Jews have a tradition which states that the last descendant of the house of David died in Spain centuries ago. There are no genealogies at present to prove that the kingly house of David is extinct or not, but prophecies like the one we have in consideration, and many others which speak of the prominence of David and the house of David in the day

when Jehovah will be manifested, make it very clear that among the wandering sons of Israel there are yet lineal descendants of the house of David. If they do not know it themselves, Jehovah knows it, and they will know it through Him. The feeble ones, literally the stumblers, among His people in that day of manifestation will be like David. What a hero David was! A man of war and strength conquering always and never conquered. And now the stumbler in Israel, the weakest one, will have strength and courage like David. And David shall be as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them.

2. The Vision of the Pierced One and its Results: Verses 10-14. This is another great Messianic prophecy mentioned in the New Testament. In John xix:37 it is written, after the blessed side of our Lord had been pierced, "And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced." It is significant that the Holy Spirit speaking in the preceding verse, "that the Scripture be fulfilled," avoids this well known phrase in the verse we quoted and does not say that the looking on Him has been fulfilled. It was not then fulfilled, nor is it fulfilled during the age of Gospel preaching, but its fulfillment comes in the day which is prophetically described in the verses before us. Matthew xxiv:30 and Revelation i:7 refer also to this portion of our chapter.

We do not follow the rationalistic reasonings of the school of criticism on this passage, nor do we mention the many question marks which these modern infidels have put over against this great prophecy. One of the mildest critics, Canon Driver, says: "The passage is, however, one of those which our ignorance of the circumstances of the time makes it impossible to interpret as a whole satisfactorily or completely. As the text stands the speaker must be, of course, Yahweh, and it is, no doubt, true that the Jews had pierced Him metaphorically by their rebellion and ingratitude throughout their history. . . . 'They pierced Him literally and as the crowning act of their contumacy, in the Person of His Son on the Cross' (T. T. Perowne; quoted by Driver),

but these considerations do not explain the passage here." The New Testament quotations as given above are to any believer sufficient evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ is meant, and therefore explain the passage fully.

What a day it will be when the Spirit of grace and supplication comes upon the remnant of His people, when He appears in the clouds of heaven, when they shall see Him and know Him by the pierced side. The great vision of Saul on the road to Damascus will then be repeated; the young Pharisee saw Him as one "born out of due season." He was in his experience the earnest that the remnant of the nation to which Paul belonged would some day pass through the same experience (see Studies in Zechariah, pp. 120-125). A great mourning follows. It will be like the mourning in Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon (see 2 Chron. xxxv:22-27 and 2 Kings xxiii:29). What a day of repentance it will be when this takes place.

CHAPTER XIII

1. The Cleansing. 1.
2. The Blessed Results of the Cleansing. 2-6.
3. The Smitten Shepherd. 7.
4. Salvation and Condemnation. 8-9.

1. The Cleansing: Verse 1. This verse is misplaced; it belongs to the preceding chapter. It is a prophecy of the cleansing of the repenting portion of God's earthly people. The fountain of cleansing, so beautifully expressed by Cowper:

> There is a fountain filled with blood,
> Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
> And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
> Lose all their guilty stains—

was in existence throughout all the centuries of Israel's long dispersion. But the nation in blindness did not believe. Now all is changed. Their guilt is pardoned; all unrighteousness and iniquity is taken away. The Redeemer has come and turned away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. xi: 26, 27). The prophetic Word is filled with promises con-

cerning this future cleansing of the remnant of the nation (Psa. ciii:1-4; Isa. xxxiii:24; Ezek. xxxix:29; Isa. lix:20, 21; Isa. lxv:19).

2. The Blessed Results of the Cleansing: Verses 2-6. The cleansing is followed by the cutting off of the names of the idols, so that they will no longer be remembered. The false prophets and the unclean spirits, which had control during the great tribulation will be cast out and forever pass away.

We have seen before in the 10th chapter that Israel will return to idolatry in the last days. The unclean spirit of idolatry which was cast out will at last return with seven others and will find the house empty, swept, and garnished. And the evil spirit, with the seven others more evil than himself, will enter in and dwell there, so that the last state of Israel becometh worse than the first. This will happen to this evil generation. This section of the 13th chapter makes it very clear that when the fountain is opened against sin and uncleanness, that idols will have been in the land, and false prophets prophesy there immediately before the manifestation of the Lord from heaven; for how could the names of the idols be cut off from the land if there were none there? Palestine may well be put down now as the great centre of false worship. Greek and Latin crosses are seen on all sides in Jerusalem and other places, while saints, holy houses, and places are worshipped and adored.

On the spot where the Lord's house stood, there stands to-day the mosque of the false prophet. All is idolatry. Of course when the Lord returns these false temples will be destroyed, and the Greek and Latin idolatries, as well as Islam, will forever pass out of existence. There will be a purging of the land from these abominations. This may be included in the prophecy here. Still, it is the people of Israel who are especially concerned in the prophecy before us. The land has often been the scene of idol worship, and the people engaged in that which Jehovah despises. It will be so again, only in a much worse form, when false prophets who are inspired by the unclean spirit and demons themselves will be their guides.

We must look to Revelation for a key. It is well known to all students of the prophetic word that all which comes after the third chapter in the last book of the Bible is future still. We are yet in the things which are present. When the Lord has taken the Church to Himself then the great visions, tribulations, wrath, and judgment will be fulfilled. Aside from the scenes in heaven we learn from Revelation the events in the earth during the great tribulation which ends with the wrath from heaven.

Now in the 9th chapter and the 20th verse of Revelation we read, And the rest of mankind which were not killed with these plagues repented not of the works of their hands that they should not worship demons and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.

Who is the person mentioned in verse six? In "Studies in Zechariah" we speak of this man as representing the counterfeit Christ, imitating the true Christ. But after more careful consideration we have come to the conclusion that this view is untenable. It is Christ Himself. He is here contrasted with the false prophets. It is the Pierced One. After they look upon Him they will inquire about those wounds in His hands and He will answer them, revealing the story of His rejection. This leads to the prophecy in the next verse.

3. The Smitten Shepherd: Verse 7. This certainly is Christ, whose rejection, more than His rejection by His own, is here revealed. It is the same as in Isaiah liii, the suffering One, who is a man, and called My Fellow, the fellow of Jehovah of Hosts, Jehovah Himself, who speaks here, and what does He speak? The sword is to work against His Shepherd and against His own Fellow. The blessed mystery of the atonement is thus brought out. Indeed it is the heart of the Gospel here. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have life eternal. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. It speaks of Him, the forsaken One, the Son of God, forsaken in the hour of His agony, the sword

upon Him and against Him. In the New Testament we find the passage quoted in the Gospel of Matthew, 26th chapter and 31st verse: Then saith Jesus unto them, all ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

4. Salvation and Condemnation: Verses 8-9. There is a very misleading idea among many students of prophecy as if the statement of Romans xi:26, "all Israel shall be saved," meant that all the Jews will receive the blessing and the glory on that coming day of salvation. Some of the evil systems, like the Russell cult (International Bible Student Association), go so far as to teach that there will be a resurrection of all the ungodly Jews of past generations for a second chance. This passage silences these unscriptural theories. The promise of restoration and glory belongs to the godly, the believing and repenting remnant. The mass of Jews, who call themselves "Reform Jews," who in reality are infidels, because they deny the Word of God and have completely discarded the faith in a coming Messiah, will be cut off. The third part (the remnant) only will be saved.

CHAPTER XIV

1. The Last Conflict and the Manifestation of the Lord. 1-5.
2. The Complete Salvation. 6-11.
3. The Punishment of the Enemies. 12-15.
4. The Conversion of the World. 16-19.
5. The Holiness of Jerusalem. 20-21.

1. The Last Conflict and the Manifestation of the Lord: Verses 1-5. Post-millennialism has tried to find some explanation of this chapter, but has failed. The common view that the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70 A. D. is the burden of this prophecy is ridiculous. We read that "all nations will be gathered against Jerusalem." Is this true of the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus? It was only one nation. Did the Lord then go forth and fight against the Romans? No! He used the Romans in judgment. Did His feet stand at that time upon the Mount

of Olives? Did He come and all the Saints with Him? Were the results of the year 70 the results predicted in the rest of this chapter? Any intelligent Christian must see how foolish it is to interpret this passage as having seen its fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem.

Nor is it true that previous sieges have fulfilled this chapter. Ptolemy Soter took Jerusalem about 315 B. C.; Antiochus the Great took the city in 203 B. C.; the Egyptian Scopus in 199 B. C.; Antiochus Epiphanes in 170 B. C. There were other sieges besides. But none of these sieges is predicted here. It is future.

What siege then is it? Some premillennial expositors have a very convenient way of calling everything "the battle of Armageddon" and claim that the twelfth and the fourteenth chapters predict one and the same event. But this is erroneous. It is not the Beast, the head of the ten kingdoms, the Roman revived Empire. The details of prophecy concerning the last events can only be understood by distinguishing between the leaders of opposition. There is the Beast, the political head of the Western nations, the little horn of Daniel vii. He is in league with the second Beast, coming out of the earth, with two horns like a lamb (Rev. xiii). This is the false Christ, the man of sin, who is also called in Revelation the false prophet. He has his seat in Jerusalem, where he poses as Israel's Messiah-King and is worshipped as such. Then there is another, the King of the North, typified by the Assyrian, the great invader whom Ezekiel also describes. This King of the North is the sworn enemy of the one who is in Jerusalem, that is the false Messiah; they hate each other. The King of the North heads the confederacy of nations from the East, Russia, Persia, Gomer and different Asiatic nations. Then Jerusalem is finally attacked by these nations. It is this final attack which is described in this chapter (see Joel ii). But then the Lord goes forth, and fights against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle (Exodus xiv; 2 Chronicles xx:15-17). He manifests His kingly power and glory in the defense of His City and His people. His feet

stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, the place so well known in His earthly life, the place from which He departed to go back to the Father. A great physical upheaval takes place, for the mountain splits in the center, toward the east and west, forming a great valley between. The earthquake mentioned is the same to which Amos refers (Amos i:1). All this has never been; it is future, and the details of it will probably only be understood at the time of its fulfillment. The valley will be the avenue of escape, and the divided Olivet mountain will be ever after a witness to the literal fulfillment of God's Word.

"And Jehovah my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." Different manuscripts and versions have instead of "with Thee"—"with Him." But the difficulty is cleared up when we consider that it is the Seer who addresses Jehovah, whose feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. Zechariah bursts out in speaking to Him, "And Jehovah my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." What a glorious manifestation it will be when He is present and all His holy angels with Him!

2. The Complete Salvation: Verses 6-11. Verses six and seven have been rendered in different ways, and have been differently interpreted.

> "And it shall come to pass in that day
> That the light shall not be with brightness and with gloom,
> And the day shall be One.
> It shall be known unto Jehovah.
> Not day and not night.
> And at evening time there shall be light."

We believe that the passage means the physical phenomena in nature which are always connected with the day of the Lord (see Amos v:18; viii:9; Joel ii:31; Matt. xxiv:30, and other passages). Changes will then occur which will mean that the present order of day and night are superseded by another order, so that when the evening time comes it will be light. That day will just be one day of light and glory. The glory light will probably be shining throughout

the thousand years, and cover the earth as the waters cover the deep.

From verse eight we learn that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem (Ezek. xlvii). This must be interpreted as a literal fact, and likewise as a symbol of the great spiritual blessings. "From the holy city go forth westward and eastward the waters which are destined to heal the long miseries of a world groaning under Satan's thralldom, themselves the effect and symbol of the rich blessing which Jehovah then diffuses far and wide, and this above all the changes ordinary in nature; in summer and in winter it shall be. Drought and frost will not affect them; neither will the obstruction of the hilly ground toward the west; the waters shall flow as steadily toward the great sea on the west as to the Dead Sea on the east." The Lord Jesus Christ, Jehovah, then shall be King over all the earth; and His Name shall be one. His throne is established over the earth and He rules the nations in righteousness. In that day of His glorious manifestation His Name will be revealed as the One who on earth declared "I and the Father are One"; He will be known as the One Lord and God, and worshipped as such. All idolatry is at an end and the abominations connected with it are abolished. Confusion is forever ended (Zeph. iii:9).

Other physical changes in the land are indicated in verse ten, and from verse eleven we learn that there shall be no more curse and that Jerusalem shall dwell safely.

3. The Punishment of the Enemies: Verses 12-15. This is the description of the dreadful punishment which will befall the enemies in that day. It is to be read in connection with the third verse, the Lord fighting against those nations, and the punishment will be upon them when He appears. Thus it is seen in Revelation xix. He appears, and after His appearing there is the scene of punishment of the enemies. "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice to all the birds that fly in midheaven, Come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh

of horses and them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond and small and great (Rev. xix:17, 18).

"And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isa. lxvi:24).

4. The Conversion of the World: Verses 16-19. It is clear from this passage that some nations, or representatives of nations, will be left of those who came against Jerusalem. They, with all the other nations of the world, will then know the Lord and worship Him. The temple will then stand in Jerusalem as the house of glory and a house of prayer for all nations. There will be a perfect worship, grand and glorious, and it will not be confined to Israel, but the nations will join in it. We may learn perhaps from this verse that the Lord will leave every year once His place on His throne over the earth and come down to Jerusalem and show Himself in His glory before the worshiping multitudes in the earth, as He is seen in the New Jerusalem above. The occasion is the feast of Tabernacles. It is the millennial feast. It is a feast kept in remembrance of Israel's journey through the wilderness for forty years and all their subsequent wanderings. It stands also for the ingathering of the full harvest. It is a feast of joy, praise, and thanksgiving. The Jews keep it to the present day, though few know the full meaning of it. Every year when it comes again they read this 14th chapter of Zechariah. It is strange indeed. What a glorious feast that will be, kept there in Jerusalem, when the fullness at last has come! The fullness of the Gentiles has been gathered in, and is in the New Jerusalem; the fullness of Israel has come in the earth, and their receiving has been life from the dead, and Gentiles know the glory of the Lord. Some find a difficulty here in the fact that it is stated that the nations, the residue of men, are to come up to Jerusalem, and the difficulty is that it will be impossible for all of them to do that. It is not at all necessary that every individual must go up to Jerusalem once in a year. Perhaps every nation will send representatives to the feast

of Tabernacles, and they come in the name of the different nations and bring their presents. This seems to be indicated in the visit of the wise men from the East, who came to Bethlehem to worship the new-born King (Matthew ii). They brought gold, frankincense and myrrh. In Isaiah lx:6 we read of the coming of the Gentiles to Jerusalem when the Lord has come again. They shall come from Sheba; they shall bring gold and frankincense (the myrrh is left out here, for it speaks of suffering), and shall proclaim the praises of the Lord. As the wise men who came to Bethlehem were representatives of nations, so during the Millennium the nations will send delegations to the feast of Tabernacles. What a scene that must be! How crowded Jerusalem will be by those from Greenland and from the interior of Africa, from India and the islands of the sea, as well as from the nations which composed the Roman empire. The ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God, and now their praise is heard in the city and mingling with the psalms sung by His own redeemed people.

On the other hand verses 17-19 acquaint us with the fact that even during the coming age of the kingdom-glory there will be disobedience among the nations, which will be fully demonstrated at the close of the millennium, when a final revolt takes place.

5. The Holiness of Jerusalem: Verses 20-21. The most holy person in Israel, the high-priest, carried the inscription, "Holiness to Jehovah" around his mitre, but now even the little bells of the horses bear that inscription. In that temple which stands during the Millennium, sacrifices will be brought, but there will be no difference in the vessels which are used in Jerusalem, the meanest and smallest will be holy. In one word, all will be holy, all will be consecrated to Jehovah. What a perfect service that will be of the people which are then, in truth, a holy people. Application can be made of this to believers now. Surely everything the saint has, and his whole life, must be thus consecrated to Jehovah, to the Lord. No Canaanite will be there, nothing unclean. The Vulgate translates the word Canaanite with merchant. It

stands, however, for everything that is unclean and an abomination. The city will be completely purged from it.

And of the new Jerusalem it is written, "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie, but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life. . . . Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. xxi:27 and xxii:15).

MALACHI

The Prophet Malachi

We know nothing of the person of this prophet. His name only is given in the record. Critics have therefore doubted whether Malachi is really the personal name of the prophet, and many believe that it is merely an ideal name, given to the unknown person, on account of his message. Malachi means "My Messenger" or "the Messenger of Jehovah." The Targum Jonathan, an Aramaic paraphrase, adds after the name of Malachi, "*Cujus nomen appelatur Ezra scriba*," whose name is called Ezra the Scribe, thus claiming that the great and good Ezra is Malachi. But why should Ezra hide behind an assumed name? This is unworthy of the man, and more so of the Holy Spirit. Many of the leading expositors have accepted the theory that Malachi is the official name of the prophet, whoever he may have been. One of the reasons for this theory is that "the first verse does not contain any further personal description, and that nothing is said about his father or place of birth." But Obadiah and Habakkuk show the same omissions. Nor is it true that nothing was known historically of a person by name of Malachi. The Talmud has a statement which makes Malachi a member of the great synagogue, to which also the two post-exilic prophets Haggai and Zechariah belonged. Other traditions claim that he was of the tribe of Zebulon, born in Supha. There is no reason to doubt that Malachi is the real name of the prophet.

THE DATE OF HIS PROPHECY

This also has caused a great deal of dispute. That he prophesied after the captivity has never been doubted. Furthermore, the reading of his utterances makes it clear that he prophesied after Haggai and Zechariah. We learn that the temple had been completely finished, and the temple worship with priests had been restored for a number of years. After Ezra and Nehemiah's beneficent influence had passed the people went into a decline, and the conditions which the prophet rebukes were the results of their backsliding. The abuses which were corrected by Ezra and Nehemiah had taken hold upon the people again. The exact time can hardly be fixed. It seems by comparing Malachi i:8 with Nehemiah v:15 and 18 that Nehemiah was no longer governor when Malachi exercised his office.

THE MESSAGE OF MALACHI

As the last prophetic voice of the Old Testament, Malachi, in unison with all other prophets, announces the coming of the Messiah and

points once more to Him. The next prophetic voice, after the four hundred silent years, is the voice in the wilderness, the herald of the King, of whom Malachi predicted that he should come. But the message of Malachi is overwhelmingly condemnatory. "The great moral principle unfolded in this book is the insensibility of the people to that which Jehovah was for them, and to their own iniquity with respect to Jehovah—their want of reverence for God, their despisal of Jehovah. Alas! this insensibility had reached such a point that, when the very actions which proved their contempt were laid before their consciences, they saw no harm in them. Nevertheless, this did not alter the purposes and counsels of God, although it brought judgment upon those who were guilty of it" (see chapter i:2, 6, ii:14, iii:7, 13—Synopsis).

It is unquestionably true that the spirit manifested by the people in Malachi's day assumed later the concrete forms expressed by the two leading sects of Judaism, when our Lord was on earth, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. "The outward or grosser kind of idolatry had been rendered thoroughly distasteful to the people by the sufferings of the exile; and its place was taken by the more refined idolatry of dead-work righteousness, and trust in the outward fulfillment of the letter of the divine commands without any deeper confession of sins, or humiliation under the Word and the will of God." It has been well stated that "Malachi is like a late evening, which brings a long day to a close; but he is also the morning dawn, which bears a glorious day in its womb." The shadows are dark, but there is the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, still to take place, when all shadows flee away.

But beside the apostate masses of the people, steeped in a dead formalism, there is seen in the book of Malachi the faithful remnant. It is interesting to follow this remnant, we have so often mentioned in our annotations, through the entire Jewish history, past, present and future. There was always a godly remnant. We see that remnant in the wilderness wandering of Israel; there was a remnant during the period of the Judges, and in every other period, like the sad days of Ahab's wicked rule, when despondent Elijah desired to die, and the Lord informed him that there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. There was a remnant when Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar: a remnant returned from the captivity, and when the returned exiles degenerated, as seen in Malachi, there were still the few left who assembled together and whom the Lord owned.

In Romans xi we read that at the present time, during this age, there is likewise a remnant according to the election of grace. It is not a small remnant, who, during this age, turn to the Lord, believe on Christ and thus become members of the Body of Christ, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile. And when the age closes, and the nation faces the final calamity in the great tribulation, and the accept-

ance of the false Christ, there will be that godly remnant, as we have so often shown in our comments on the prophetic word.

THE LESSONS FOR OUR AGE

The Jewish age with all its glorious manifestations of the Lord in behalf of His people Israel, and the great revelations given by the prophets of the Lord, did not improve in its development and become a better age. Neither does our age improve and become better, the age in which God has revealed His best and offers to man the riches of His grace in the Person of His blessed Son our Lord. It ends as Old Testament times ended, in failure and apostasy. The moral conditions of the Jews in the days of Malachi are the moral conditions of Christendom. But as then, so there is now, a remnant of God's own, who are faithful to Him, and whom He acknowledges as His true Church.

THE DIVISIONS OF MALACHI

We divide the prophecy of Malachi in six sections: 1. Jehovah's Love for His People; chapter i:1-5. 2. The Rebuke of the Priests; chapter i:6-ii:9. 3. Rebuke of the Social Conditions; chapter ii:10-16. 4. The Announcement of the Messenger and the Day of the Lord; chapter iii:1-6. 5. Rebuke for Defrauding the Lord; chapter iii:7-15. 6. The Remnant and the Concluding Prophecy; chapter iii:16-iv:6.

Analysis and Annotations

1. JEHOVAH'S LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE

CHAPTER 1:1-5

The Message of Malachi begins with the sublime statement, "I have loved you, saith Jehovah." It is the message to Israel. This love is written large on every page of their history. A former prophet gave the message from the Lord, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos iii:2). And long before that Moses had told them, "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day" (Deut. x:15). And the man of God in his final utterance burst out in praise, "Yea, He loved the people" (Deut. xxxiii:3). And this generation, brought back through His mercy from Babylon, the generation that had listened to the marvelous words of Haggai and Zechariah, could brazenly answer back, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" How deep they had sunk! Greater still is the insensibility of nominal Christendom which rejects, yea, despises, the great love wherewith He has loved us in the gift of His Son.

Then the Lord in infinite patience answered them, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Jehovah: yet I loved Jacob, and hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." This takes us back to Genesis, but in vain do we look for this statement in that first book of the Bible. Though it is quoted also in Romans ix, it is nowhere to be found in connection with the story of the birth of the twins. The late scholar, William Kelly, has expressed the whole matter so well that we can do nothing better than to quote his excellent comment. "It is only in Malachi that He says 'Esau have I hated.' I could conceive nothing more dreadful than to say so in Genesis. Never does Scripture represent God as saying before the

child was born and had manifested his iniquity and proud malice, 'Esau have I hated.' There is where the mind of man is so erroneous. It is not meant, however, that God's *choice* was determined by the character of the individual. This would make man the ruler rather than God. Not so; God's choice flows out of His own wisdom and nature. It suits and is worthy of Himself; but the reprobation of any man and of every unbeliever is never a question of the sovereignty of God. It is the choice of God to do good where and how He pleases; it is *never* the purpose of His will to hate any man. There is no such doctrine in the Bible. I hold, therefore, that, while election is most clearly taught in the Scriptures, the consequence that men draw from election, namely, the reprobation of the non-elect, is a mere reproduction of fatalism, common to some heathen and to all Mohammedans, the unfounded deduction of man's reasoning in divine things." With these good words we agree perfectly. The hatred against Esau is mentioned in this last book, because it was well deserved, after all the opposition and defiance of God the descendants of Esau, Edom, had manifested. But the love wherewith Jacob was loved was undeserved. His love for His people had been fully manifested, as well as His displeasure against Edom by laying his mountains and heritage waste, and all their attempts at reconstruction failed. God was against him on account of Edom's wicked ways.

2. THE REBUKE OF THE PRIESTS

CHAPTER I:6-II:9

The priests, the religious leaders of the people, are described first in their evil ways, and rebuked. But the rebuke includes the entire people, for it is true, "like priests like people." The Lord called Israel to be His firstborn son, and therefore, nationally, He is their Father. He is the Lord, and Israel called to be His servant. But they had not honored Him, as a son should honor the father by obedience; they did not fear Him, but despised His Name. This charge

brought forth from the side of the priests another brazen statement, the result of their hypocritical self-righteousness. They answered back, demanding proof of the charge by saying, "Wherein have we despised Thy Name?" They seemed to be hardened in their consciences, though they kept up outward appearances. Such, too, is the religious condition in much of Christendom. Another charge follows, the charge that they offer polluted bread, which brought forth the retort, "Wherein have we polluted Thee?" They had considered the table of the Lord contemptible; instead of offering upon the altar the very best, as demanded in the law, they showed their contempt by bringing the blind, the lame and the sick, a thing which they would never have done to an earthly governor, who would have been sorely displeased at such an insult and rejected their person on account of it. They had treated the Lord of Hosts shamefully in their worship. Is it different in Christendom? Under such conditions, even if they were to pray to Him to be gracious, would He, or could He, regard their persons and listen to their prayers (verse 9)?

Verse 10 has often been interpreted to mean that the priests were covetous and demanded money for every little service, the opening of doors and the kindling of a fire. It has another meaning. The better rendering is, "O, that some among you would even shut the doors of the temple." The doors are the doors which lead from the outer court into the holy part. The Lord declares that it would be more profitable if they would shut these doors, and kindle no longer a fire upon the altar for nought; in other words, He wishes that the whole outward worship might be stopped. The last sentence of this verse shows this is the correct interpretation. "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand." Nor has He today any pleasure in the unscriptural worship of ritualistic Christendom, or the dead, Spirit-less worship of an apostate Protestantism.

The next verse (verse 11) is a prophecy. Is it fulfilled today, during this age? We think not; it refers to the mil-

lennial age. Critics say that the passage refers to the worship of God among the heathen, under different names, as expressed lines by a poet (Pope):

"Father of all! in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove or Lord."

Canon S. D. Driver says on this passage, "It is a tribute to the truer and better side of heathen religion." It is no such thing. But why should it not be applied to this Gospel age, in which among all nations His Name is known and called upon? There is a statement which excludes this interpretation: "and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering." The Romish Catholic Church uses this passage as one of her proof texts for that abomination, the Mass. In the canons of the Council of Trent we read that "the Mass is that pure sacrifice which the Lord predicted by Malachi should be offered to His Name in every place." Another prominent writer declares that it is "the bloodless sacrifice of the New Testament, the holy sacrifice of the mass." All this is Satanic invention. It is true the Name of the Lord is known among the nations, but no incense, sacrifice or offering is connected with the worship of the Lord in the true church. For His heavenly people the earthly sacrifices and incense, offering and priesthood, are all passed; and more than that, these things would be inconsistent with their heavenly standing and calling. It will be different during the age to come, the millennium. The last chapters of Ezekiel reveal the fact that with the millennial worship in the millennial temple incense and offerings are connected. The prophecy of the eleventh verse will be fulfilled during the Millennium. Now His Name is not universally great among the Gentiles; it will be otherwise when the Lord Jesus Christ has come back.

Then follow additional expostulations on account of these conditions.

In the second chapter the priests are again addressed. If

they do not hear, do not lay it to heart, if their consciences are not aroused, to give glory unto His Name, He would curse their blessings; yea, they had been cursed already; He would punish them severely for their contempt. Levi and the covenant with him is especially mentioned, on account of his faithfulness at the time when the golden calf had been set up by Israel in the wilderness, in contrast with Aaron who gave way to the demand of the people. But what a contrast between Levi and the priests in Malachi's day! For the priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. Such is the calling of the priest. But they had departed out of the way; they caused many to stumble at the law; they had corrupted the covenant of Levi. Therefore the Lord made them contemptible and base before all the people.

3. THE REBUKE OF THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS

CHAPTER II:10-16

The priests were corrupt, and with their bad example the people were likewise corrupt. It is the prophet who speaks in verse 10. The One Father was Jehovah, with whom the nation was in covenant relation. They had one Father, and were one as a nation. By profaning that covenant they dealt treacherously every man against his brother. The abomination in social life, by which the covenant was profaned, and the holiness of the Lord outraged, was the marriage with the daughters of the heathen. They had put away their own Israelitish wives in order to enter into these unholy alliances. The Jew acted faithlessly toward his brother, both when he contracted a marriage with a heathen woman, and when he put away his legitimate wife, and thereby descrated the covenant of the fathers, i. e., the covenant that Jehovah made with their fathers when He chose them to be a separated people. Those who have done this will surely be cut off. Verse 13 describes the weeping and the tears of the abandoned Jewish wives; it is the same condition, only worse, which is recorded in Ezra and Nehe-

miah. All was an abomination unto the Lord. Over fifty years ago a writer called attention to the divorce evil in the United States. He wrote then

"The frequency of *divorce* in the United States, so that in one of the States divorce is allowed for "misconduct," reveals the same state of things existing now, as was here condemned by Jehovah, and must bring with it the same evils, and the same punishment. What tongue can adequately tell, what heart conceive, the untold misery from this cause, especially to the deserted wives, and the children left without a mother's care! How little is the indissoluble nature of the marriage relation regarded! and the fact, that the Lord was the witness of it, and will be a swift witness against those who violate it! The Saviour only allows of one cause of divorce, and regards divorce for any other as adultery."

Since then this evil has increased a hundredfold or more among professing Christians, so that it threatens to undermine the home and all family life. It is the sign of the rapid disintegration of our nation.

And yet rebuked for these social conditions and wicked deeds, they could ask another "Wherefore?" They were so hardened that they could not see why they were to blame. The difficult fifteenth verse refers to the marriage relation, in which God makes of twain one. He made the woman for man, though He had the residue of the Spirit, the creative power by which he might have made many women for one man. And wherefore one? that is, one woman for the man—that He might seek a godly seed, to perpetuate those who are godly, which is counteracted by divorce, such as they had practised. It seemed as if the remnant who feared Him were being influenced by these corrupt practices, hence the warning. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

4. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MESSENGER AND THE DAY OF THE LORD

CHAPTER III:1-6

In this chapter and in the next we have the prophecies of Malachi as to the Messiah and His forerunner. The last verse of the preceding chapter belongs rightly to this chapter.

"Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?" It is this last bold question, produced by their arrogant pride and self-security which opens the way for the prophetic message in this chapter. "Where is the God of judgment?" The answer is, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." The first announcement of the messenger, who goes before the Lord, is quoted in Matthew xi:10; Mark i:2; Luke i:76 and vii:27. Isaiah, too, had spoken a similar prophecy in chapter xl:3. This prophecy was fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist, as the herald of His first coming; still this prophecy considered in the light of the prophecy in the next chapter, concerning the coming of Elijah, remains yet to be fully accomplished. John the Baptist was not Elijah; Elijah is still to come and do his work preceding the coming of the Lord. The messenger is followed by the Lord, the messenger, or Angel (the meaning of the Hebrew word) of the Covenant. The word Lord is here the word *Adon* with the article, always used of God. It is the Lord God who comes, and His official title is "The Angel of the Covenant." Many expositors have blundered here in that they imagined the word covenant means the new covenant of which the Lord Jesus is the Mediator (Heb. ix:15). But it is not the truth. The Messenger of the Covenant is the same "Angel of the Lord" who appeared frequently in Israel's past history, and generally in the form of a human being. The Angel of the Lord is the Son of God in His preincarnation manifestations, and He is announced here as the Angel of the Covenant. The nation believed in His coming, and in the question "Where is the God of judgment?" they had asked for Him. That there was a partial fulfillment of this prophecy when our Lord, the Messiah of Israel, came unexpectedly in the temple, must

not be overlooked, but that it was *the* fulfillment of these words is not true. It will be accomplished in the day of His Return, preceded by another messenger. Their question "Where is the God of judgment?" will then be fully answered, and what it will be we read in the next two verses (verses 2 and 3). He will purge the nation of the dross, beginning with the sons of Levi. It is the same as in Zechariah xiii:9. John the Baptist announced the same also, and when he gave his inspired testimony of the purging of the threshing floor and the burning of the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt. iii:12) he referred not to the first coming of Christ, but to His second coming.

As the result of this judgment in store for the nation, when the sorcerers, the adulterers, the false swearers, and the oppressors will be dealt with, we read in the fourth verse "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years."

5. REBUKE FOR DEFRAUDING THE LORD

CHAPTER III:7-15

Another rebuke is administered. They were alway a stiff-necked people, never obedient to His ordinances. His gracious call to return unto Him, and the promise that He will return unto them is answered by "Wherein shall we return?" They had robbed God of what was His right. The tithes and offerings which He demanded in the law covenant had been withheld. On account of it the blessing was lacking and curse was upon the nation. Then follows a command to bring all the tithes into the storehouse, the challenge to prove Him, the assurance of abundant blessing. It is strange that even those who have a good knowledge of the truth, the dispensations and the heavenly position of a Christian, should fall back upon this verse and claim that it is binding and should be practised among believers. For a system like Seventh Day Adventism, a system which has perverted the Gospel of Grace, which denies God's oath-bound covenants with Israel, which claims to be the true Israel, the system to which applies the term "the synagogue

of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not;" for such a cult to make this command a binding law is not surprising. But well taught believers should never look upon this passage as in any way in force today. True Christian giving, like everything else in the life and service of a true believer, must be done, not by law but through grace, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Nowhere in the New Testament is there anything said about tithing. A believer must be a cheerful giver, giving as the Lord has prospered him, communicating to others, doing good, remembering the poor, ministering in temporal things to those who minister in spiritual things; but all this giving must be under the direction of the Spirit of God.

The day will come when His earthly people will minister to the wants of the Lord's house (a Jewish term), so that there will be an abundant supply for sacrifices. That will be in the future day of their restoration, when the devourer will be rebuked (verse 11). It is at that time, when the millennium has come, that all nations will call them blessed, when they shall be a delightsome land (Isa. lxii:4). This has never been since it was written by the pen of Malachi.

6. THE REMNANT AND THE CONCLUDING PROPHECY CHAPTER III:16-IV:6

In the midst of all these moral conditions, the apostasy of the masses, we find a pleasing picture of a godly portion, whom the Lord mentions in a special manner. There were those who feared the Lord. They had no sympathy with the wicked practices of their brethren; they did not share the contempt and unbelief manifested by the rank and file of the people. They were drawn together by the Spirit of God; they had fellowship one with another. They came together to think upon His Name, to honor Him, to read His Word, to call unto the Lord. And the Lord heard; He was pleased with them, and He is represented as recording their names in the Book of Remembrance, the bookkeeping in glory (Psa. lvi:8). He has a special promise for such. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that

day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Such a remnant of godly ones was in existence in Malachi's day, and when they passed away others took their places. The Lord preserved such a godly seed in every generation throughout the four hundred silent years. And when that silence was broken, by the Angel's message to the ministering priest Zechariah, we see such a remnant on the threshold of the New Testament. Good old Anna and Simeon, the shepherds and others belonged to this waiting, God-fearing remnant. And so it will be before His second coming. A similar remnant will then be on earth awaiting His glorious return.

It is so in Christendom. Departure from the faith soon manifested itself in the professing church. Decline followed decline, till the awful Romish apostasy was consummated. But in every generation the Lord kept a people separated unto Himself. The Reformation came, followed by revivals and recovery of Truth. But the Spirit of God does not predict that this age ends in universal acceptance of the Truth and universal righteousness and peace, but He predicts a universal apostasy. But even then He has a remnant true to Him. That remnant is seen prophetically in the Church message to Philadelphia (Rev. iii).

In the fourth chapter is the final message of the Old Testament Prophetic Word. The Day, that coming Day of the Lord, so often mentioned in every portion of the Old Testament, is once more brought before us. It is the day of fire, the day of reckoning with the wicked, who will be consumed like stubble. But that day brings not only the fire of judgment, the winding up of "Man's Day," the dethronement of evil, but it will be the day of the sunrise. "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings." The Sun of Righteousness is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the beautiful symbol of His personal, visible, and glorious coming to usher in that day, which will last for a thousand years, in which He will rule in power and glory. The Old Testament knows nothing of His coming as the Morning Star.

That coming is exclusively revealed in the New Testament in relation with the Church. The Morning Star precedes the Sunrise. Even so, before that day comes, before the great tribulation, with wrath poured out, He comes for His saints as the Morning Star. The Church does not wait for the rising of the Sun, but for the rising of the Morning Star. While the world sleeps, and the world-church dreams its idle dreams, true believers look for the Morning Star. Some day we shall see that glorious Morning Star, when suddenly He descends with that long promised shout.

When the Sun of Righteousness arises, He will bring healing and blessing. His waiting earthly people, the remnant, will be filled with joy and gambol as calves, while the wicked will be trodden under foot.

The whole chapter is a future prophecy. While there has been a partial fulfillment of the first verse of the third chapter, everything in this concluding chapter awaits its fulfillment. Elijah the prophet is announced. John the Baptist came in the Spirit and power of Elijah, but he was not the Elijah promised here. If ye will receive it, said our Lord, this is Elijah who should come. It was a testimony to faith and not the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy. If the Jews had accepted Christ, John would have been Elijah. Our Lord bears witness to this. "Elias truly shall come first and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them." When the age closes another one will appear, the Elijah announced by Malachi, who does his work of restoration before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. His work will be carried on among the people Israel. Deceivers and impostors have occasionally arisen who claimed to be this Elijah; the most prominent in recent years is the Dowieite delusion of Zion City. Such is the havoc produced by not dividing the Word of Truth rightly.

The close of the Old Testament Prophetic Word is majestically solemn. In the beginning of the Old Testament

stands written the sin and the curse which came upon the race through the fall of man. The final testimony in Malachi speaks of Him who comes to take the curse upon Himself, the promised Christ; who comes to deal with the wicked, who comes to bless and to remove that curse. The New Testament which follows tells us of Him and of His matchless work, the fullness of redemption and the all-sufficiency of Grace. And the final New Testament book shows the consummation, the coming judgments, the righteous judgments of the Lord, and the fulfillment of all "which was spoken by His holy prophets;" ending with the great words, "Surely I come quickly! Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

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